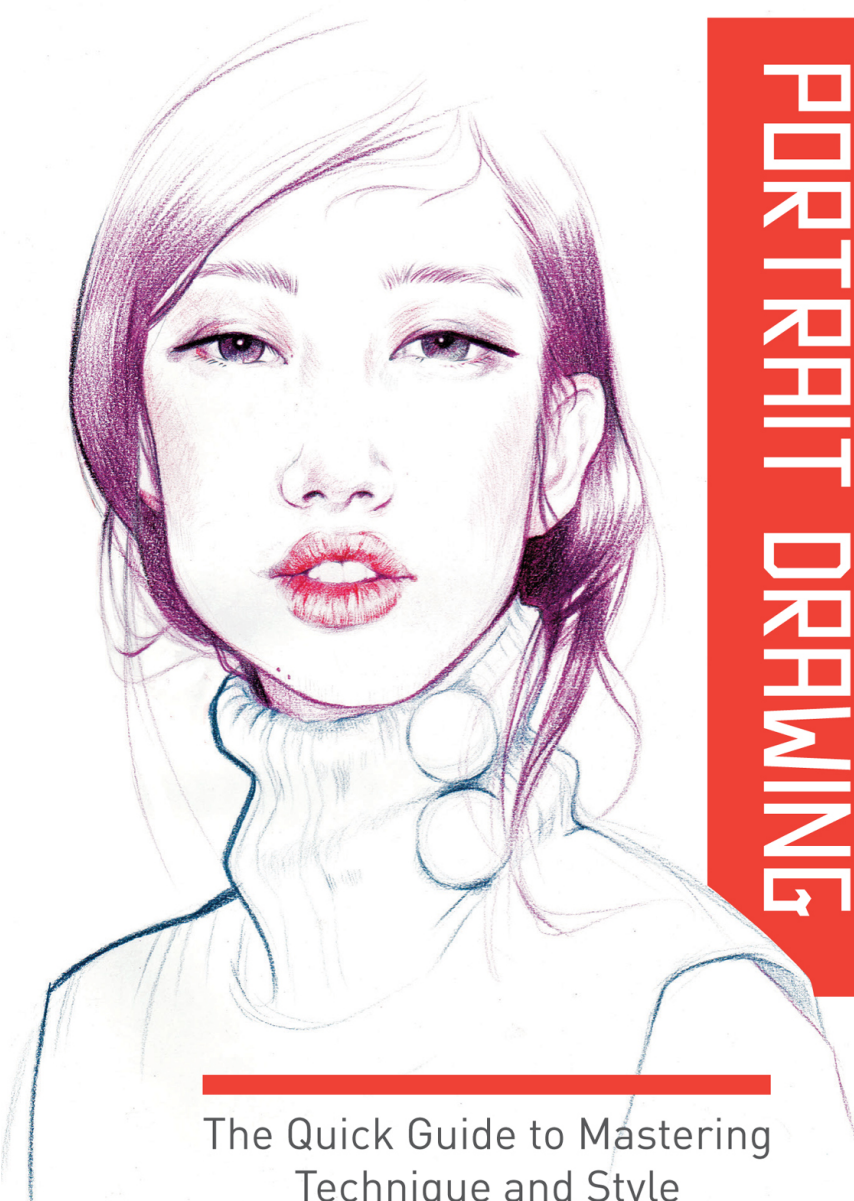


POCKET ART

PORTRAIT DRAWING



The Quick Guide to Mastering
Technique and Style

Miss Led, a.k.a. Joanna Henly

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INTRODUCTION

Growing up, I drew every single day, filling pads of paper with images of the people around me. When I wasn't portraying family members and friends, I would silently capture unsuspecting strangers and passersby with my pencil and paper, as I still do now.

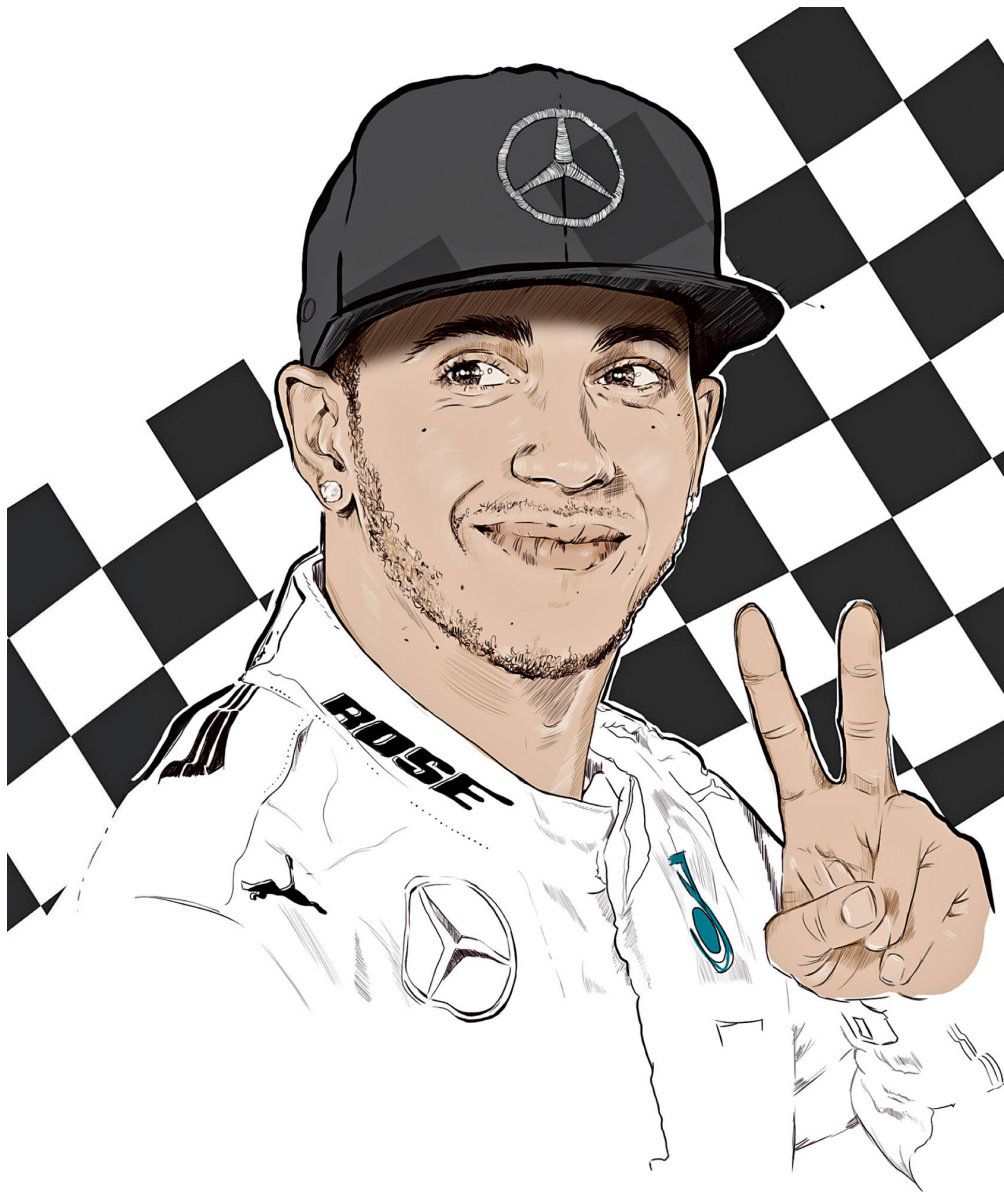
I feel so blessed to be making a living by drawing and painting. Although I am commissioned by brands globally to create portraiture and fashion illustration, I continue to pack a sketchbook when I leave the studio so I can enjoy freer gestural responses to sketching people wherever I go. That's what's so addictive about drawing—it's easy to access and you can do it just about anywhere.

The best way to learn to draw is to look, practice, and look again. Drawing is something that never becomes old or tiresome because you are always learning—and that adds to the excitement of creating something from nothing. The more you draw, the more you develop your style and an awareness of the inspiration all around you. With portraiture, there is never a shortage of subjects!

That's why I've created this book as a visual guide. I've packed it with hands-on information and easy-to-follow guides to help you get started.

This book is designed to fit easily in your bag or backpack. Keep it with you for sketching on the go or open it at home to get ready for your own inspirational journeys.

You have everything you need in this guide, so grab yourself a sketchbook, a few basic materials, and let's get started!



Lewis Hamilton, commissioned by *T3* magazine

YOUR SETUP



POINT OF VIEW

When you're at home with a choice of places to work, I recommend sitting or standing at a desk or work table. When possible, work on an angled surface. Make sure your work surface is not too low, which will quickly tire your back and neck, or too high, which will affect your line of vision.

You want a good amount of distance from your drawing so that you can step back, or lean back, and view the whole drawing, not just the details.

If you don't have a table or desk with an adjustable angled surface, tape your paper to a drawing board or sheet of stiff cardboard or wood. Sitting with one end of the board on your lap and the opposite end propped against a table, you'll be able to find a good angle. Or, if you prefer, place the entire board on the table and prop one end on a solid stack of books. I find that using a bit of Bostik Blu-Tack removable adhesive at the bottom of the board—to stop slipping—is very helpful.

HOW TO HOLD A PENCIL

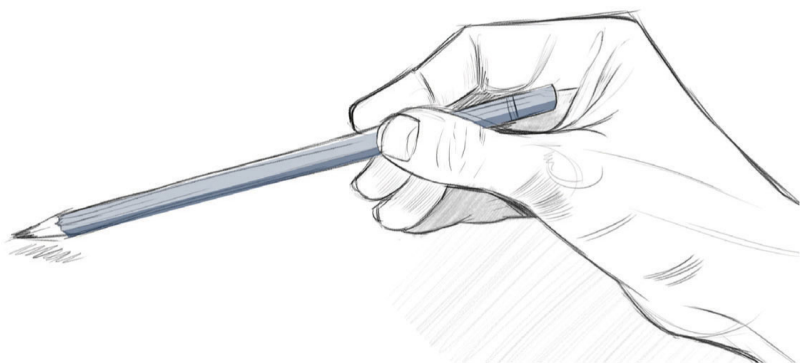
You'll use two familiar holds while drawing. In the first, the pencil almost

rests between your index finger, middle finger, and thumb—try it to get the feel of the lighter grasp and the extra freedom it allows. The second hold is a more familiar grip, most commonly used to hold a pencil while writing, in which your fingers and thumb control the pencil and it is held closer to the lead. See how the position of the pencil differs in each.

FOR INITIAL, SOFTER LINES, SHADING, AND RENDERING

When you make your initial lines of a drawing on a sheet of paper, you'll want them to be as soft as possible. These lines are there to map your final shapes. They are the lines that are going to help you get a feel for the form of your drawing. They should be faint lines that are as thin as an actual strand of hair, barely visible.

For fine lines, hold your pencil as shown below. Allow the side of your palm to rest on the paper while you move your fingers—keeping your palm as an “anchor” is great when you are trying to make repeated lines for rendering. Try doing this now. Start by drawing a circle. Now, can you draw it any lighter? How about even lighter than that? Be *patient* and remember that what they say about practice making perfect is true!



FOR DEFINED LINES

For darker, more definitive lines, hold the pencil closer to the lead. Make sure you've mapped out the softer hairline marks first. It's hard to remove dark lines once they're down, and it's not worth rushing ahead.

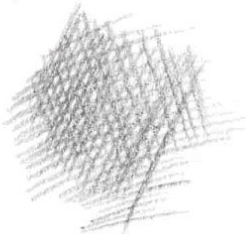


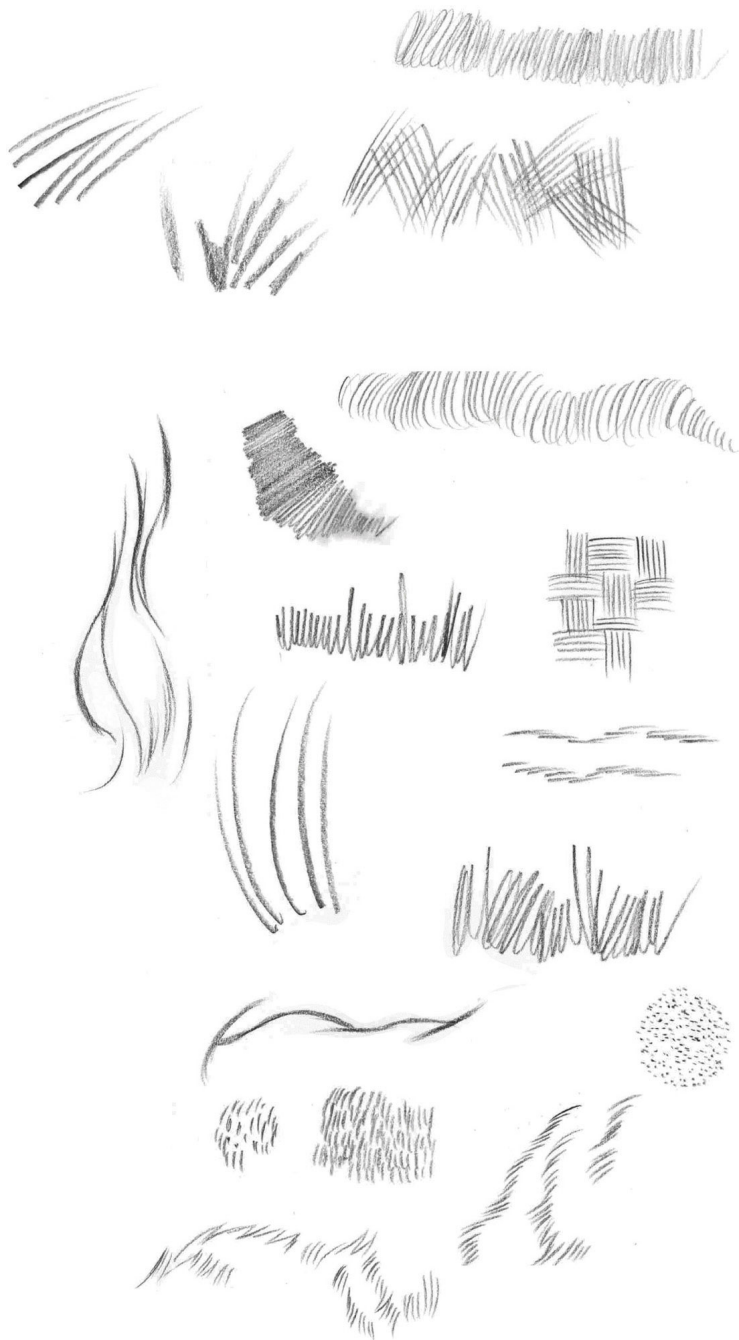
MARK MAKING

You can easily represent the different textures and materials of a person's hair, clothing, or environment using different marks and strokes. Practice making different weights of line by changing the angle of your pencil, bearing down heavily, or barely skimming the surface of the page.

As a warm-up, try drawing straight lines from the top of the page down. Draw diagonal and horizontal lines, turning the paper, so that you're still dragging the pencil vertically from top to bottom.

In creating curved lines, I keep my hand in one position and draw an arc from right to left, again moving the paper so that I can continue the motion.



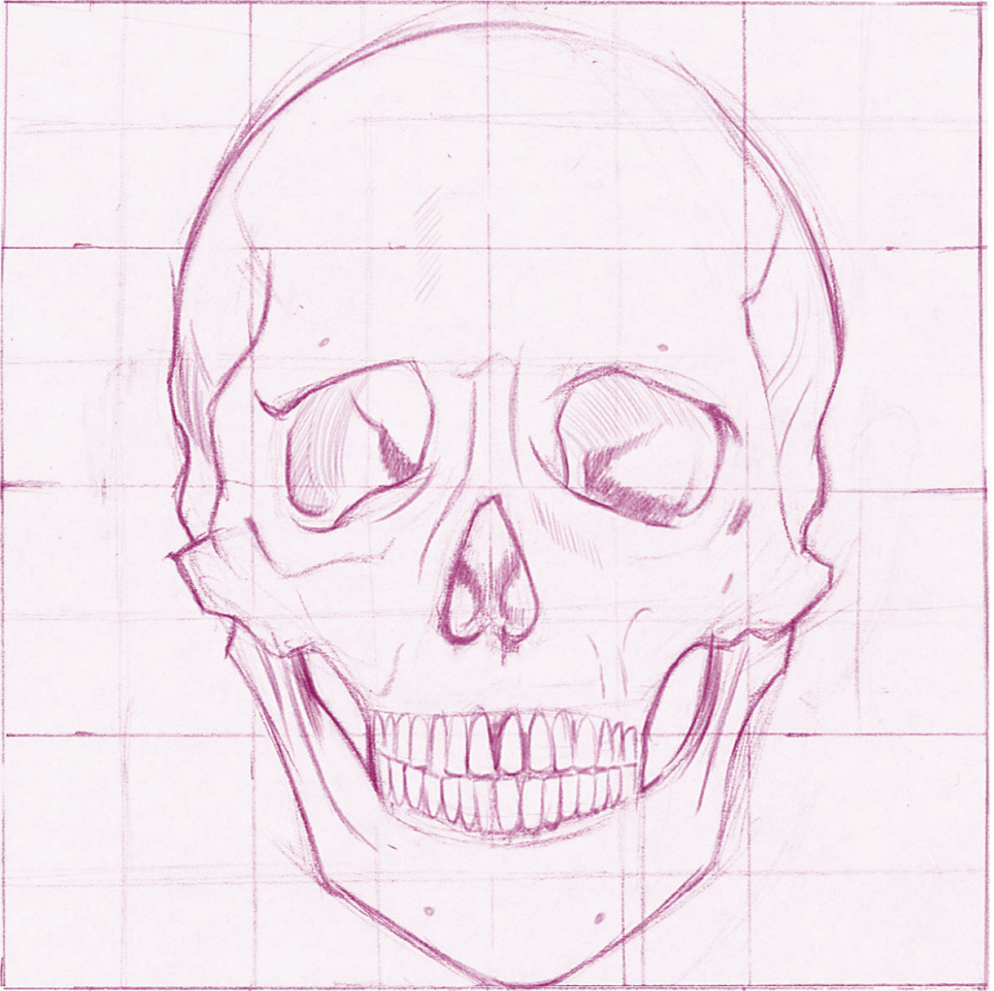


UNDERSTANDING THE FACE

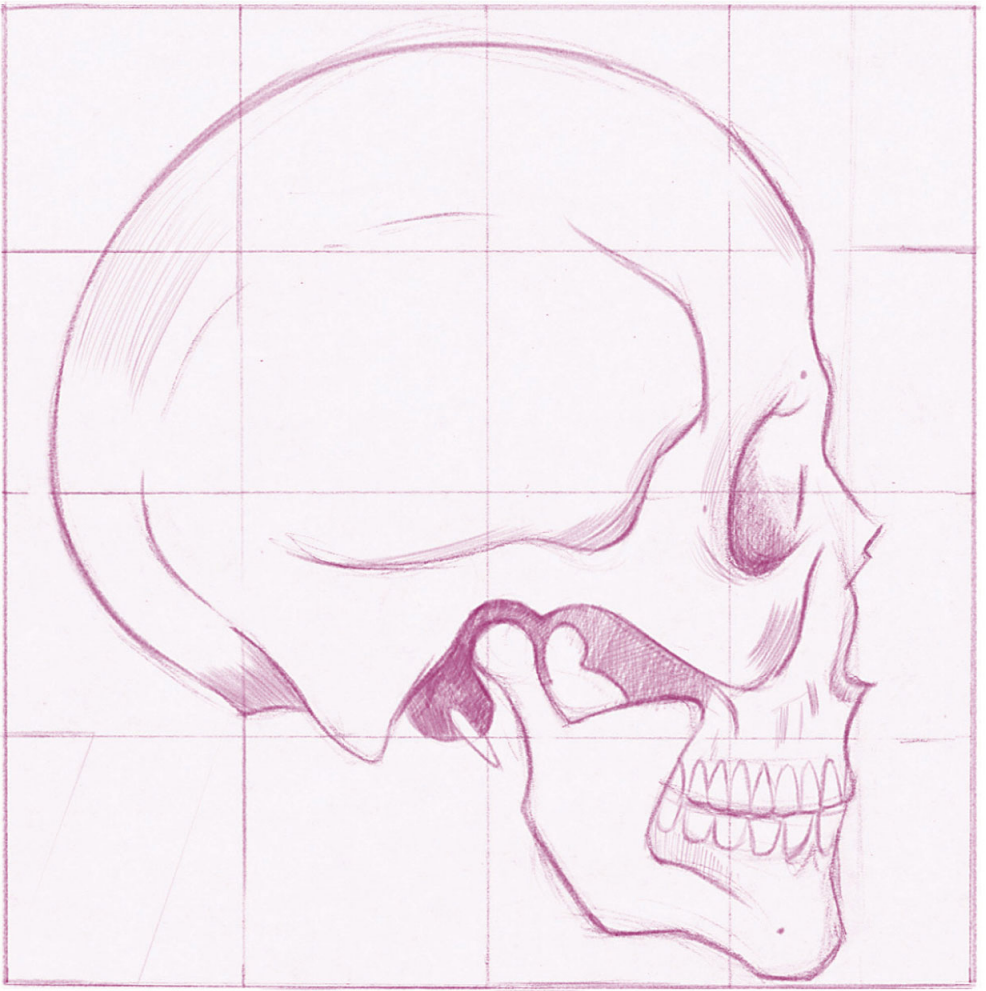


STRUCTURE, SHAPE, AND FORM

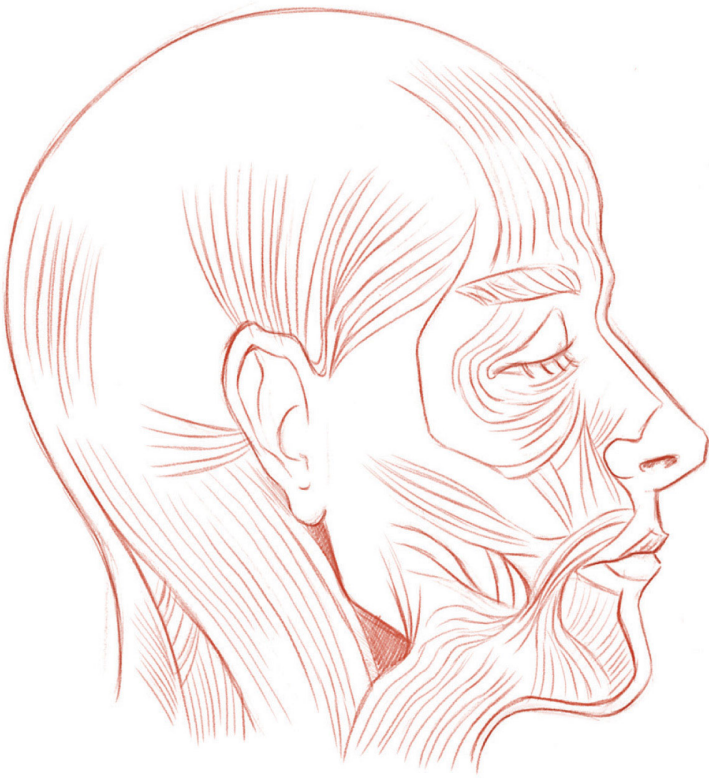
Drawing what we think we see cannot take precedence over what is actually there. The more we understand the face beneath the skin, the easier it is to get the “bones” of a portrait down on paper.



Study a diagram of the human skull online or in an anatomy book. Then make your own sketches of the bones and muscles.



Using graph paper to sketch the skull will help you to understand the proportions of the face. It's also helpful to compare the skull proportions of a male, a female, and a child.



Drawing the muscles of the face will help you to see how the mouth moves and the forehead furrows.

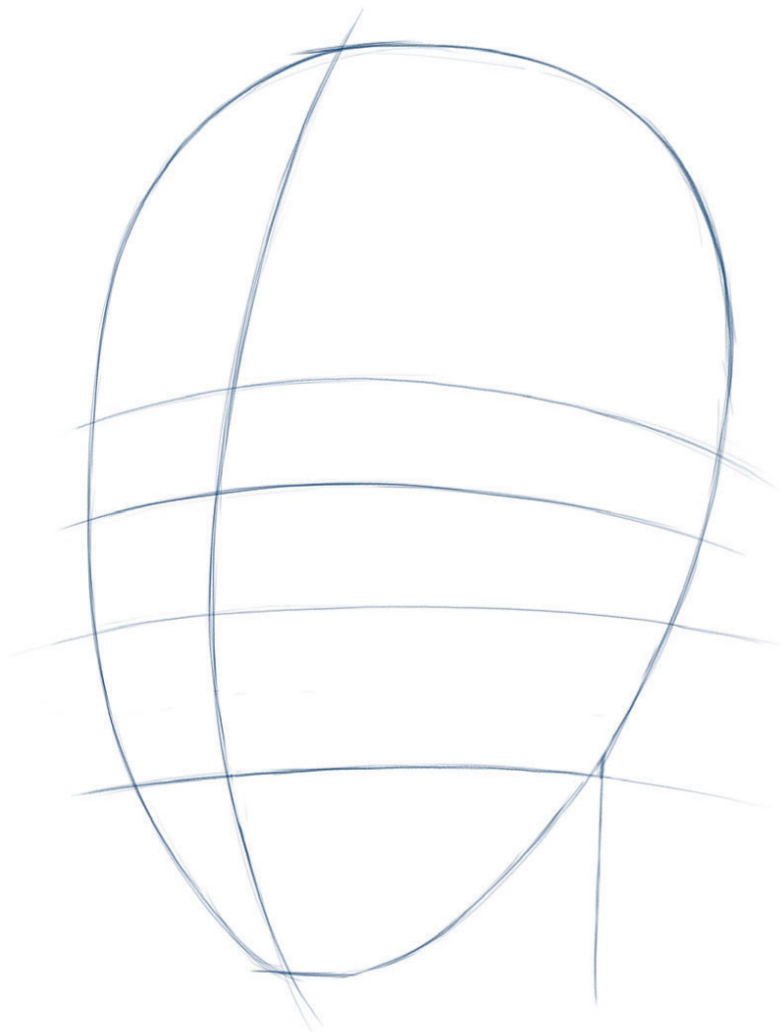


The muscles are part of what gives a face its character. Understanding how they work will improve your drawing.

FACIAL RELATIONSHIPS

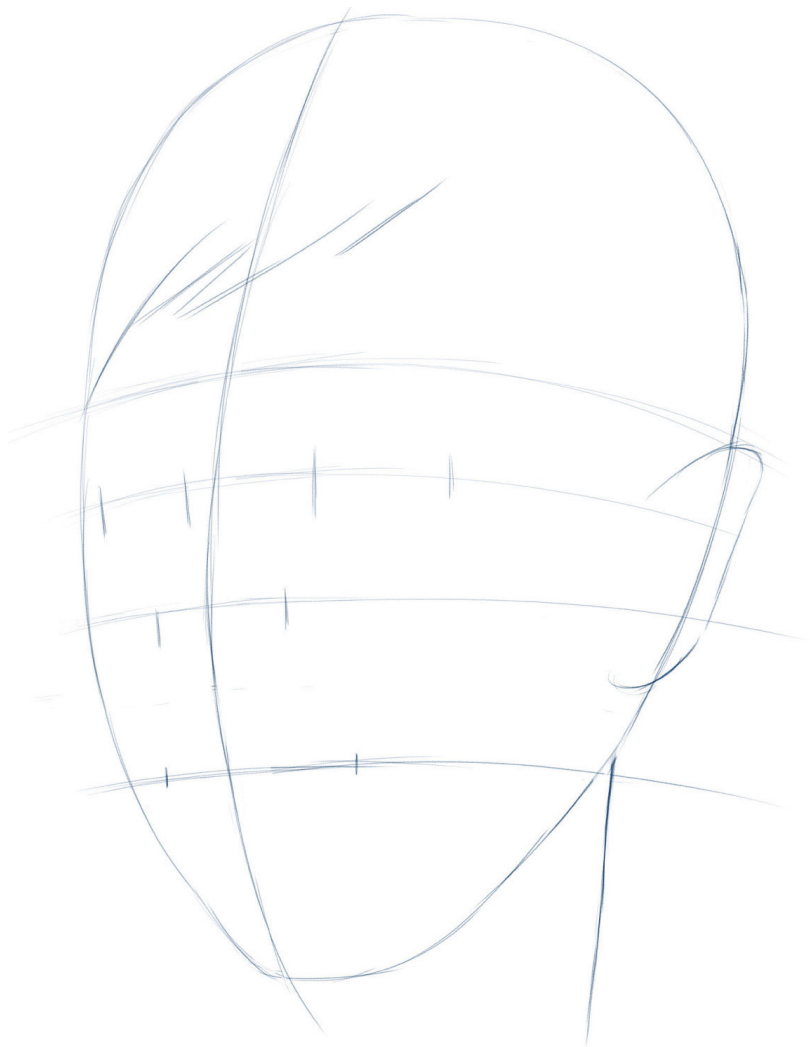
To gain an understanding of the proportions of a face and the relationships between each feature, try working from a photo that clearly shows the shape of the face and the neck. If this is your first time trying a portrait, I recommend making a photocopy of the photo and then drawing on a sheet of tracing paper placed over the photocopy.

Start with the basic oval of the face. Don't worry about how many lines you need to get the right shape. All your lines should acknowledge the head's curved surfaces.

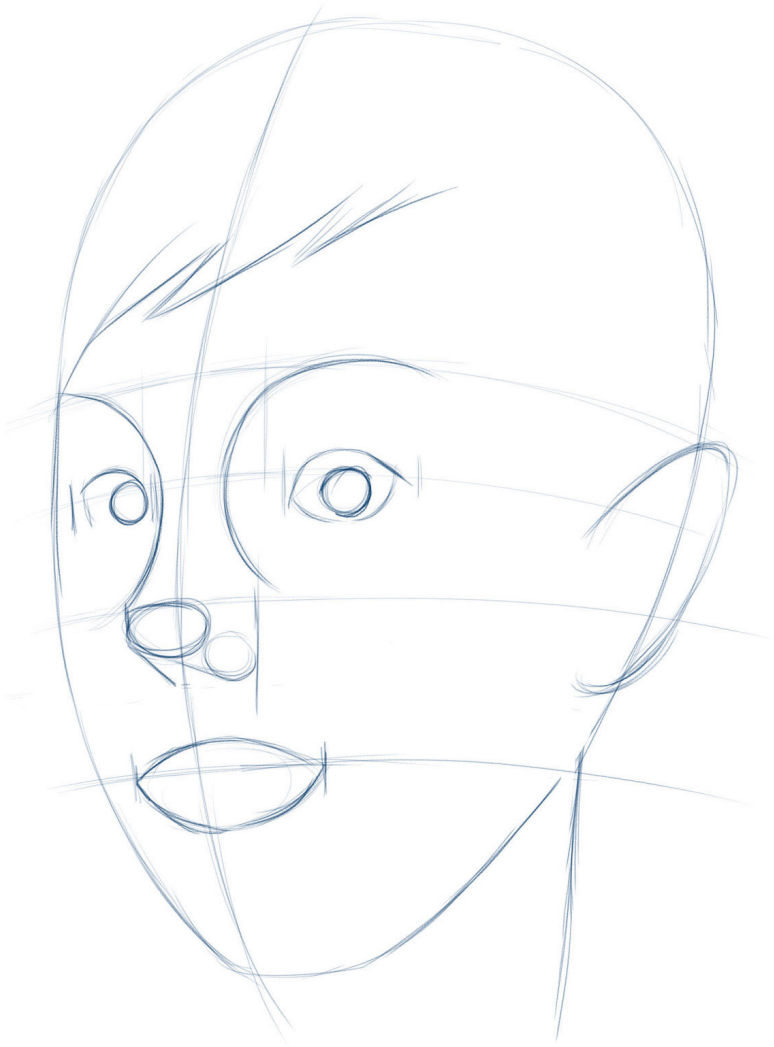


Add light guidelines for the facial features. Mark the center of the face with a vertical line—for a turned head, this guideline will be placed to one side

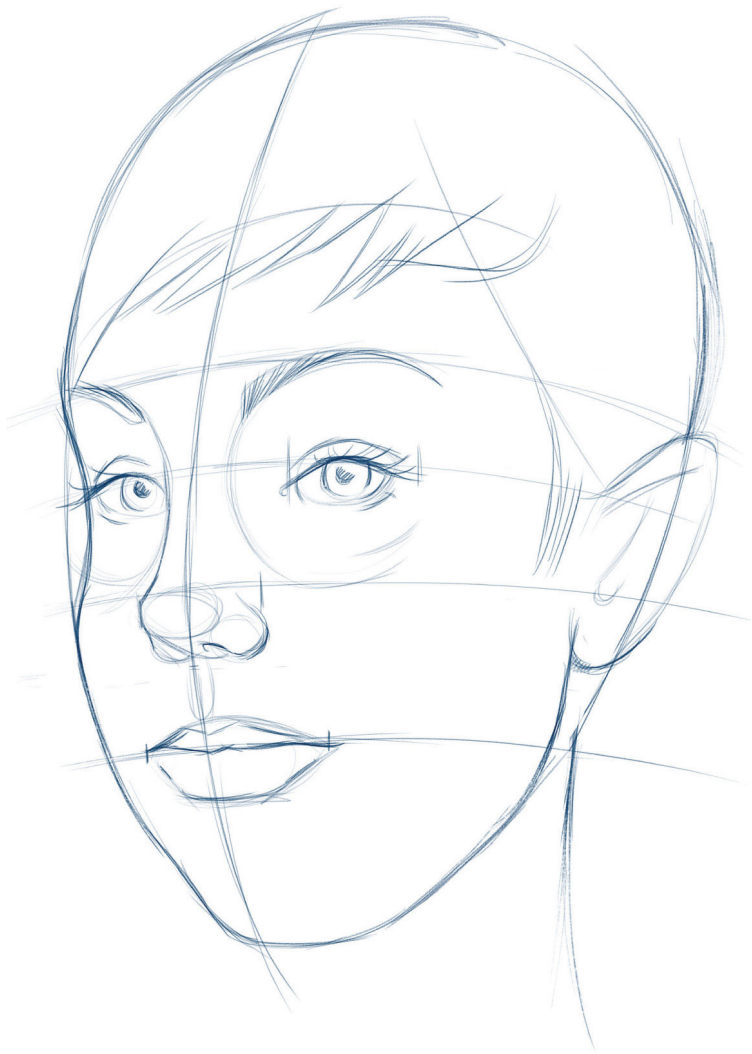
or another instead of in the center. Add horizontal marks to position the features. The eyes are about halfway between the top of the head and the chin. The eyebrows and tip of the nose are about an equal distance above and below the line for the eyes. Wrapping the guideline for the mouth around the head will help you get the shape of the mouth correct later.



Mark the width of the elements of the face with dashed lines. Start with the sides of the nose, equidistant on either side of the vertical guideline. Next, mark the placement of the eyes. Then, mark the outer edges of the mouth; these are generally in line with the iris of the eyes. I've introduced a light outline of the ear and hairline, which help me see that everything is balanced correctly.



Now the drawing is starting to take shape. Look back at your drawings of the diagram of the human skull. Using the circles representing the orbital cavities for guidance, draw the large eye sockets. This will help you shape the eyebrows and bridge of the nose. Use small circles and ovals to sketch in the forms of the eyes and irises, the “ball” of the nose, the nostrils, and the mouth.





PORTRAIT TIPS:

- » Keep moving around the face as you work—this is important! It's very easy to get focused on perfecting one face part at a time, but often, just as you perfect that part and step back to look, you discover that it's out of balance with the other parts of the portrait.

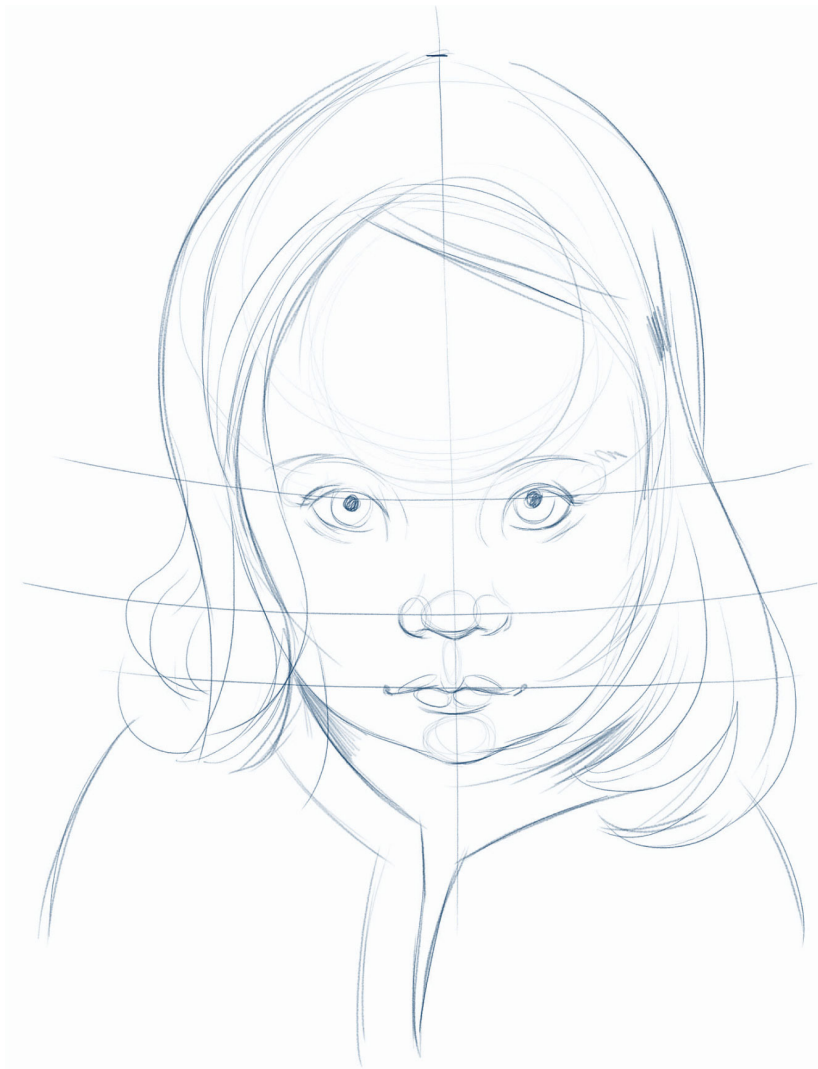
Note: Always keep your lines light.

- » When I teach portraiture, I often ask my students to pick up a fresh sheet of paper and start another portrait from the beginning before finishing the first. This can help, especially if they are struggling. The positive things they learned from their first portrait drawing are quickly transferred to the next one.
- » It's better to keep moving, learning, and developing, rather than working for hours on the same thing. If it's not working for you, put the drawing aside, work on something

else, and come back to the first one later. Many students using this method discover that in returning to an earlier, unfinished piece, they're able to understand where corrections are needed almost instantly and are happier with their finished work.

CHILDREN'S FACES

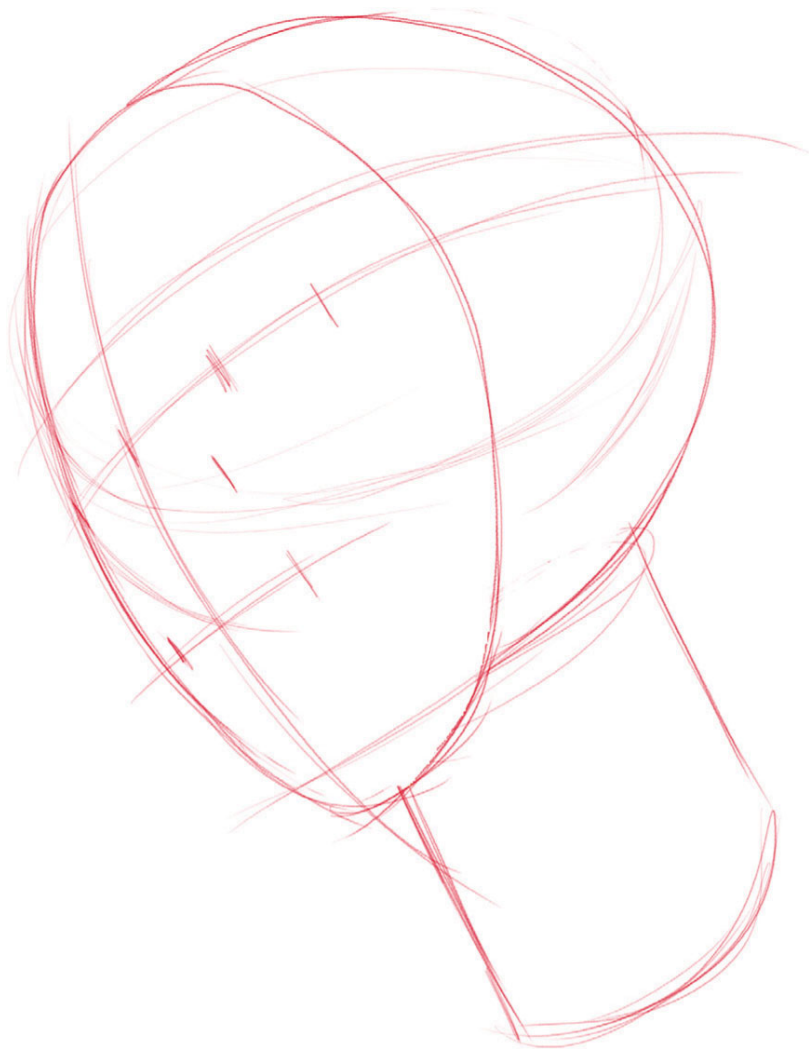
In children's portraits, note that the facial features, particularly the eyes, are larger in proportion to the rest of the face; they also appear lower in the face.



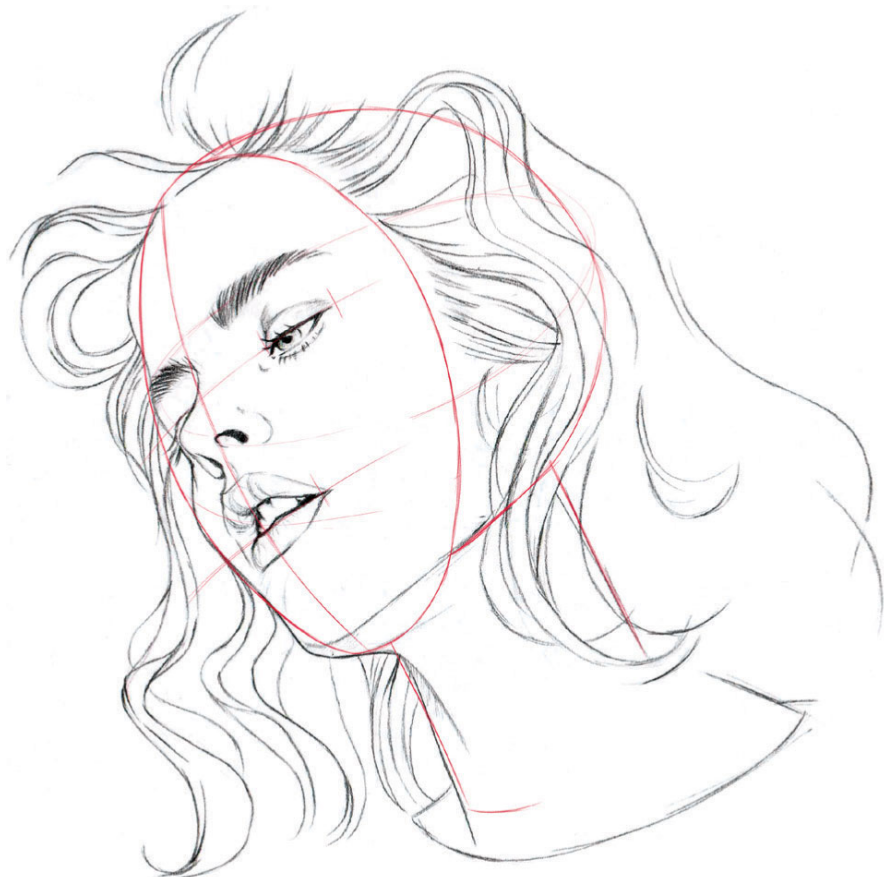
Drawing a child's portrait with more shading than lines will keep the face soft.



Beautiful Amelie, 2015



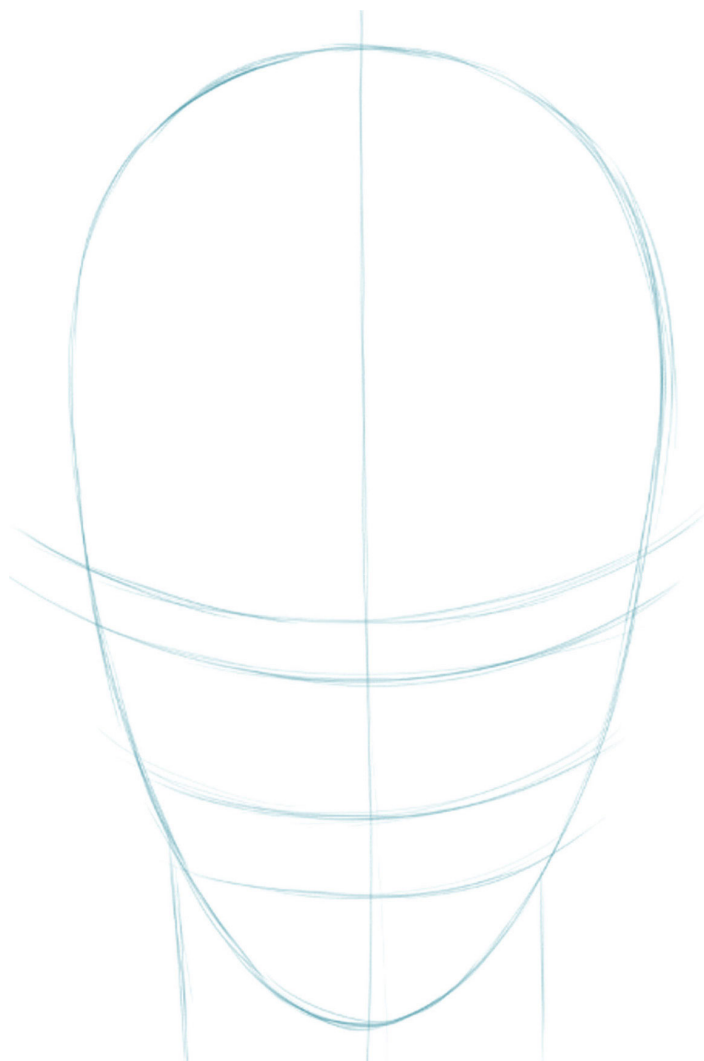
With its expressive features and contours, the face can be read as a map. Before getting caught up in capturing a likeness in a portrait, let's focus on pinning down the form and structure of the face. Start with guidelines. I wouldn't attempt a drawing without them. Using the guidelines will help you map out the face in every position. Here, tipped sideways, the horizontal lines demarking the placement of the eyes and mouth curve upward, allowing you to see the features of the face from below.

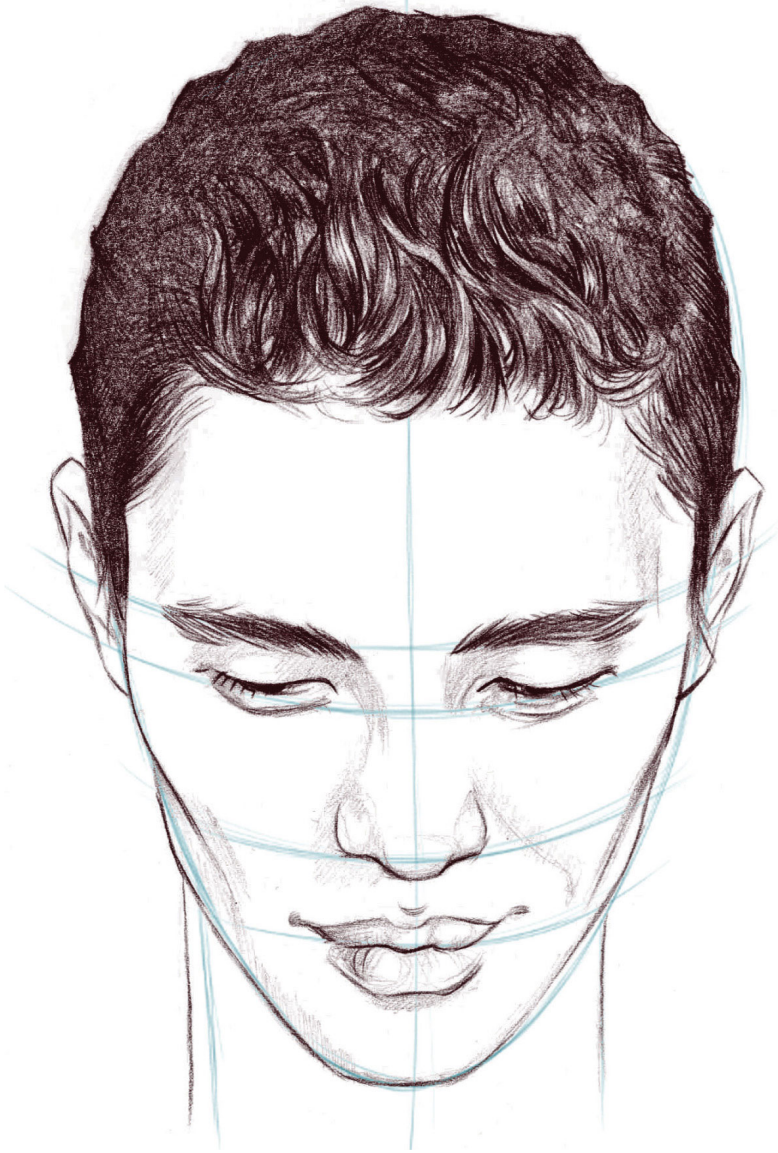




LOOKING DOWN

Start with your oval. Add the central line, which bisects the face between the eyes and runs in a curve from the top of the head to the bottom of the chin. This is going to help you map all the further lines from here.

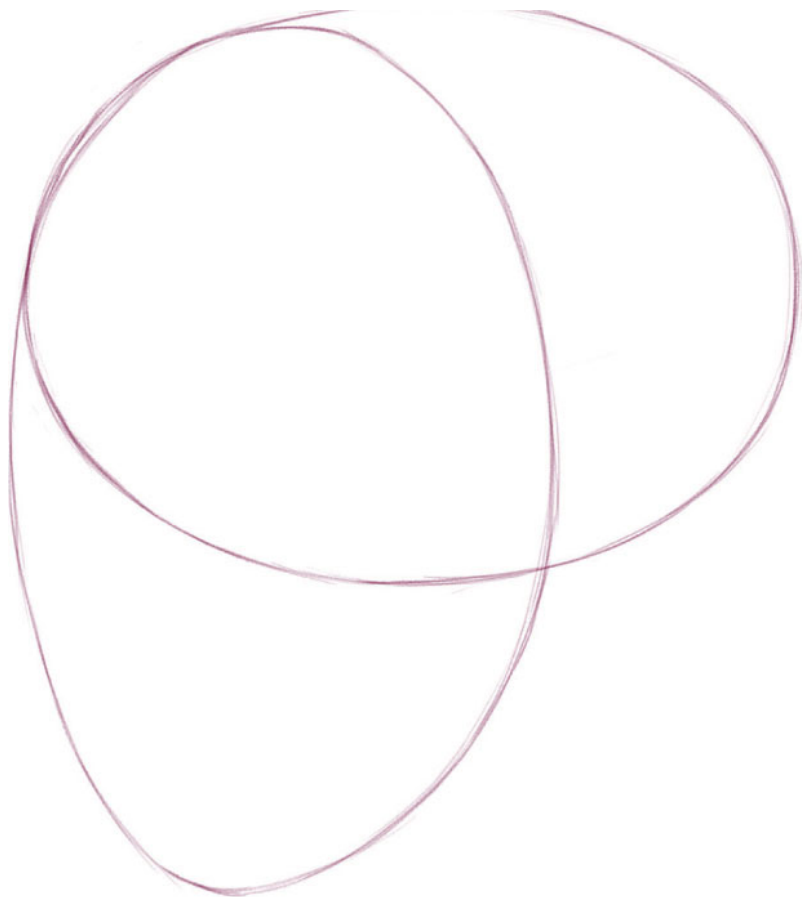


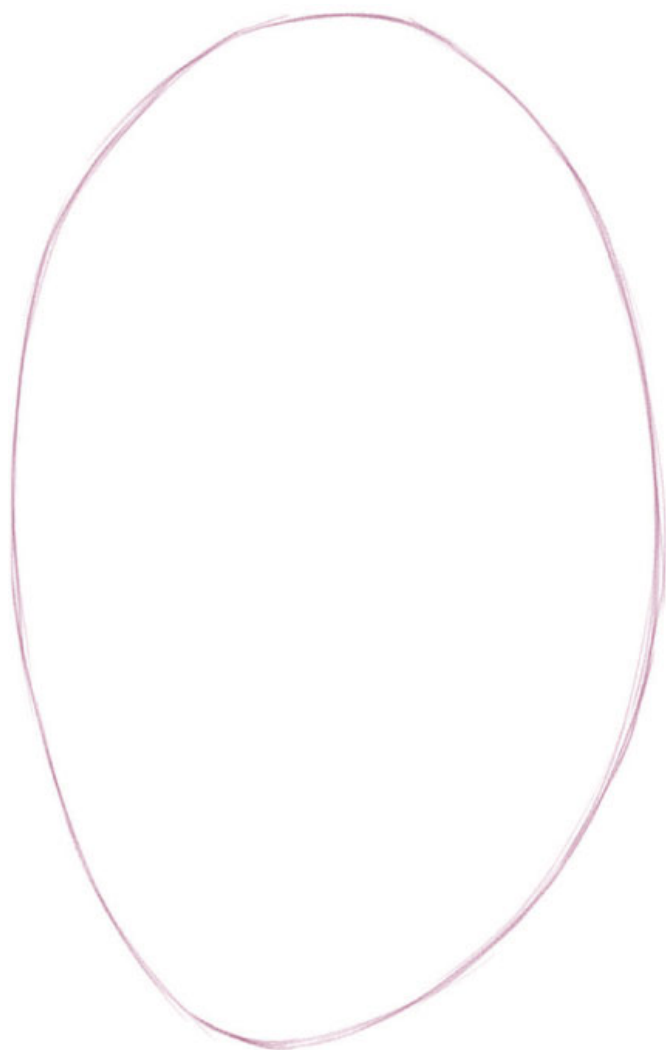


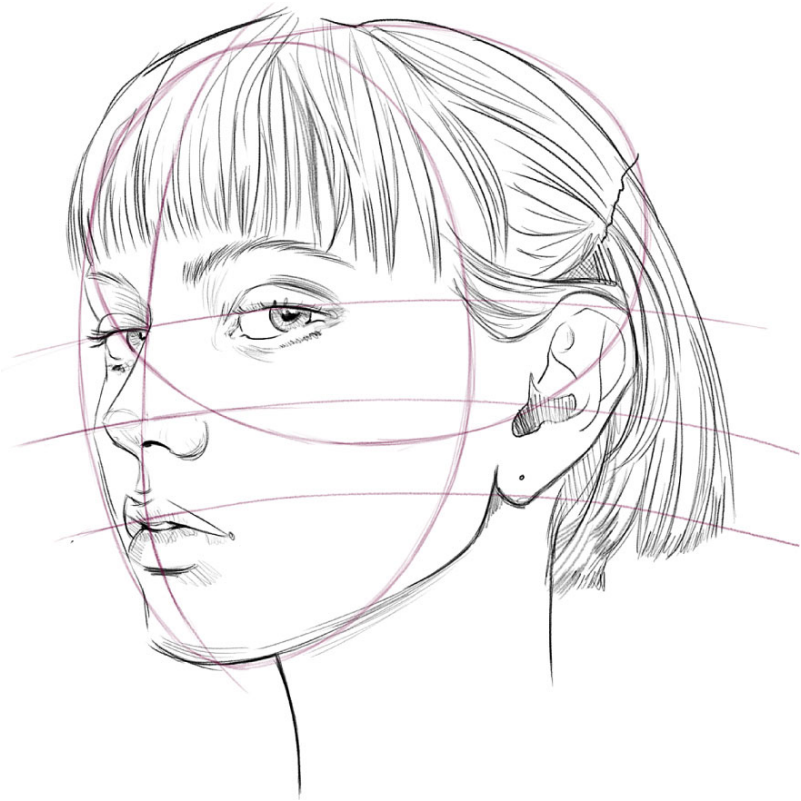
With the face turned downward, the lines marking the positions of the eyes and mouth will curve downward also. See how the lines connect the ears to the nose and eyes.

LOOKING SIDEWAYS

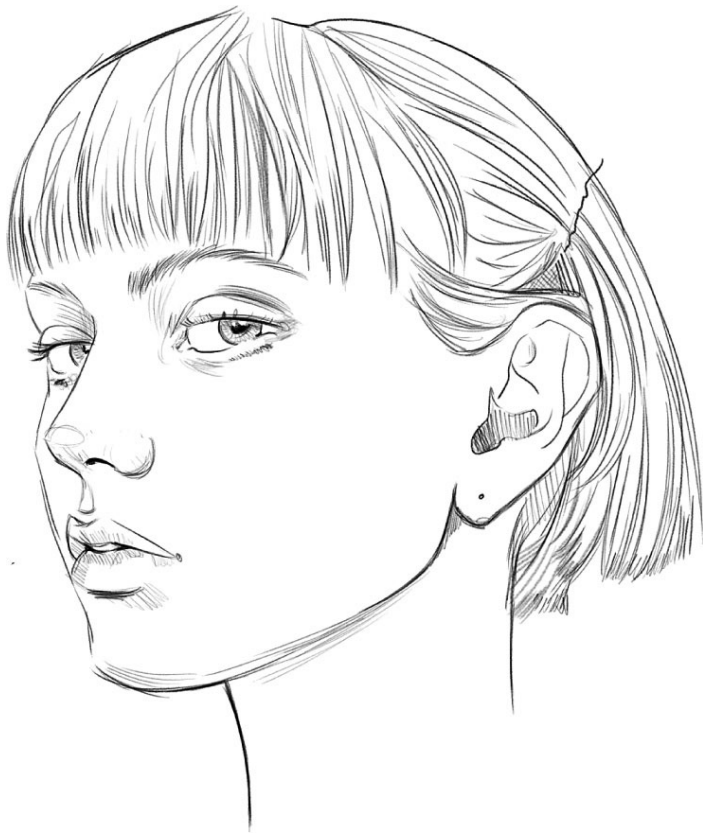
For a three-quarter angle, use two overlapping ovals, as shown here. The first oval guides the face shape, and the second oval provides your guide to the side and back of the head and the placement of the neck.







In this drawing, you can see how the guidelines, opposite, help you understand the shape of the face in a three-quarter view.



Add your guidelines for positioning the features. Note how the eyes and mouth line up with the top and bottom of the ear.

For the head tipped forward, below right, the horizontal guidelines will curve downward.



Claire Denis, *Little White Lies* book

With a straight-on view of the head, you need only a single oval as a guide for the face shape. For the head tipped back, as shown below, the horizontal guidelines will curve upward.

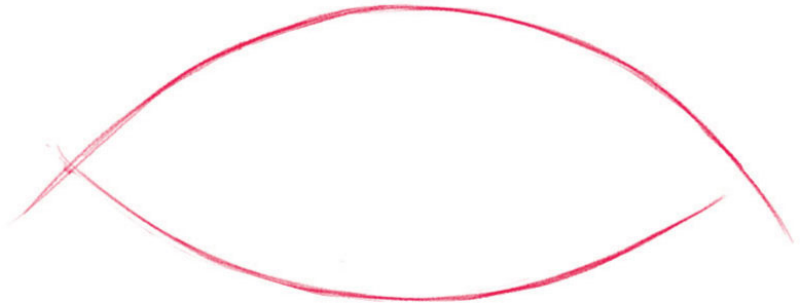


FEATURES

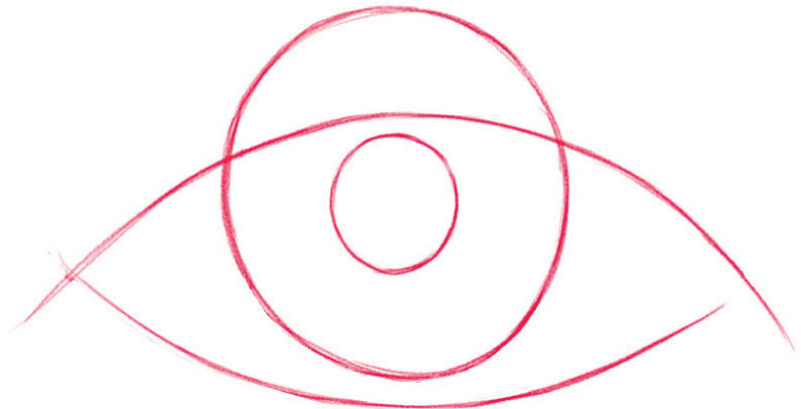


THE EYES

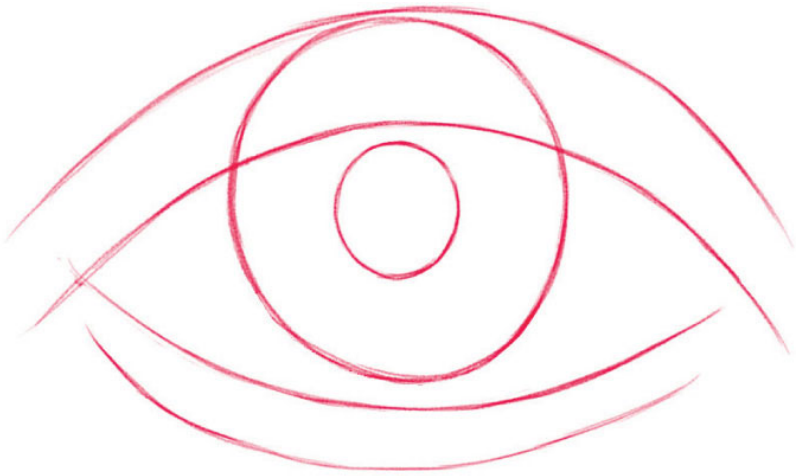
Eyes reveal so much about the face. To capture their expression, you need to understand light and shadow and pay close attention to positioning the iris in both eyes.



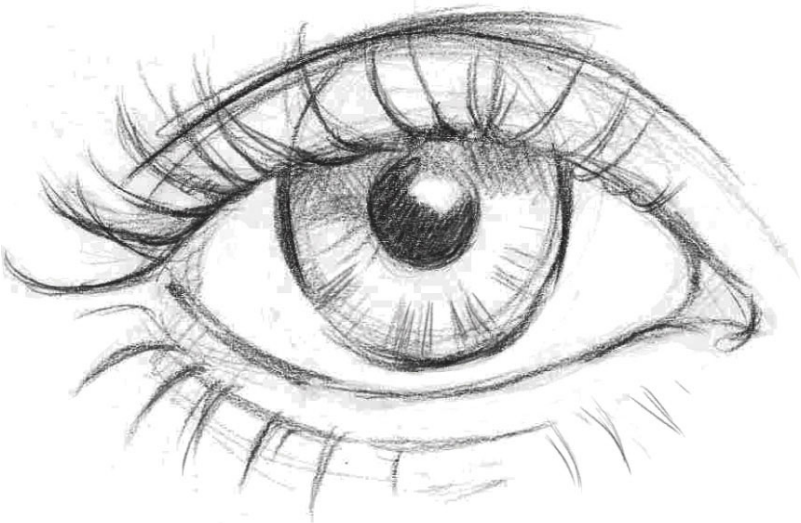
Here is a super easy way to draw the eye from a frontal view. The upper and lower curves are almost mirror images in a pinched oval shape.



The circle of the iris cuts through the top line and leaves a gap above the lower line. Add a smaller circle for the pupil.

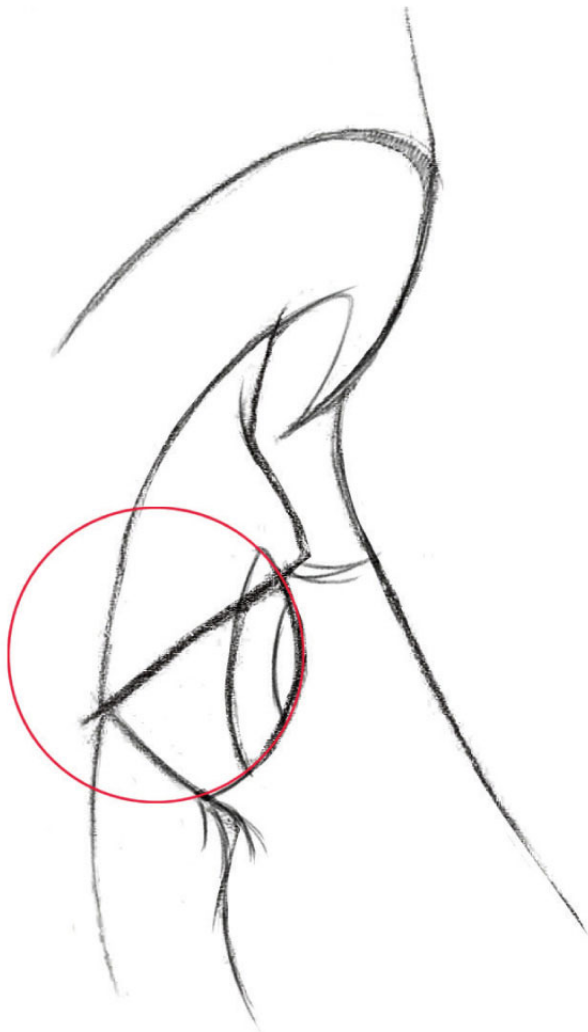


The line of the lid acknowledges the shape of the eyeball. The top eyelid is almost parallel to the existing top line and almost touches the top of the iris. The lower lid is almost parallel to the existing line but becomes narrower at each end.

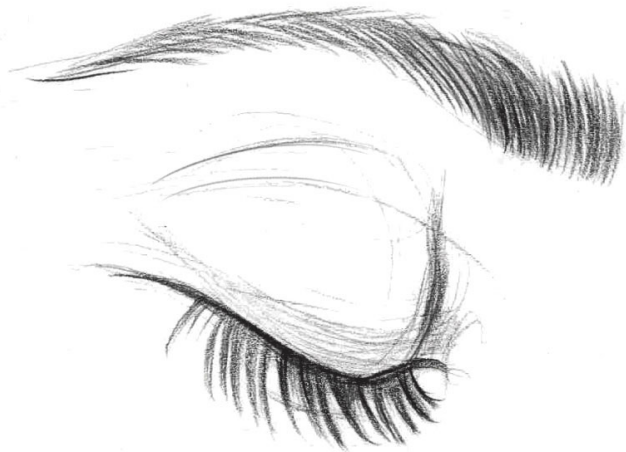


I suggest studying the curves of the eyelashes since they change slightly from one end of the eyelid to the other.

Note: The white of the eye, the sclera, is never fully white and requires shading to show the shadow cast by the eyelashes.



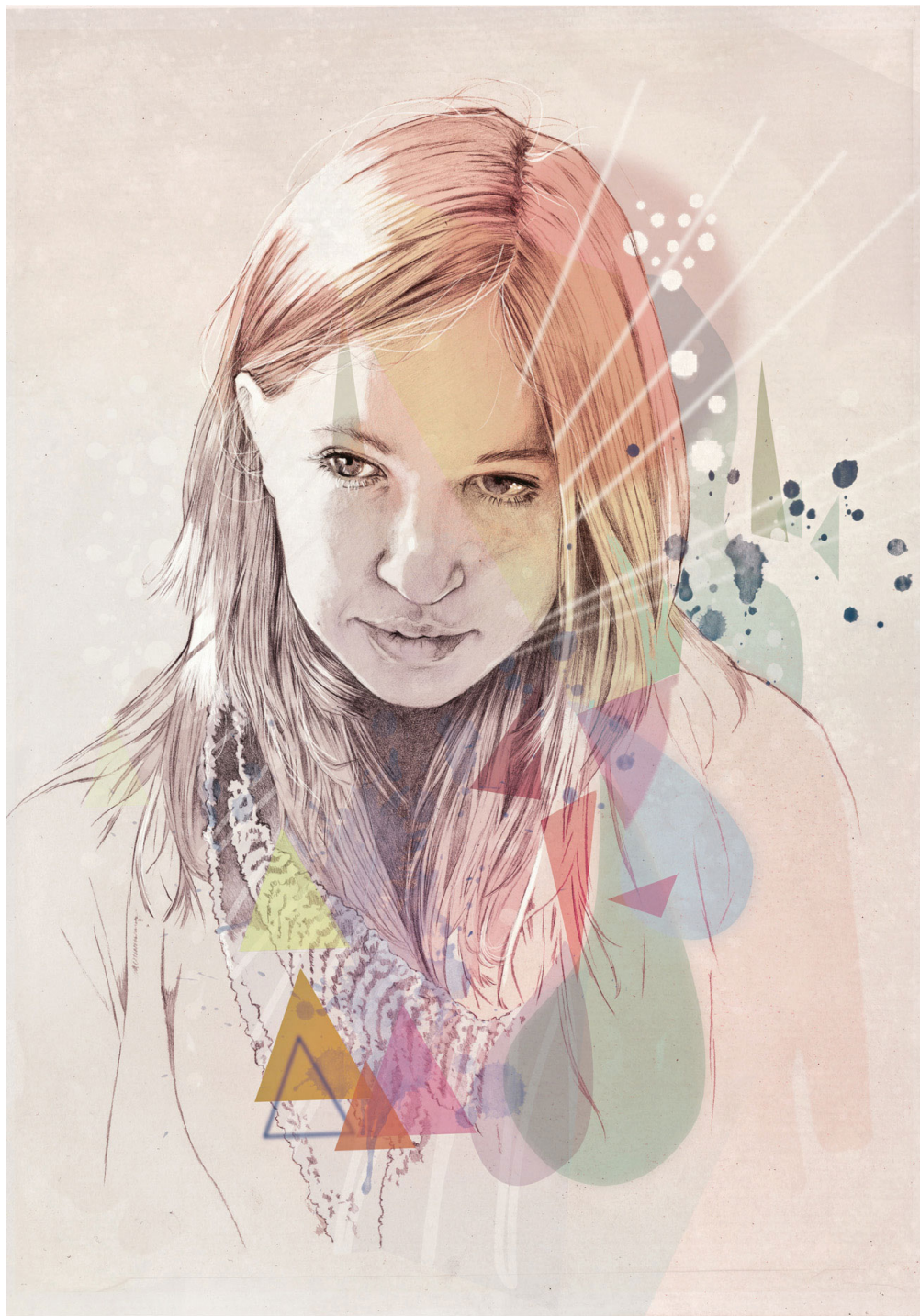
In profile, the iris is part of the curve of the full circle of the eyeball.

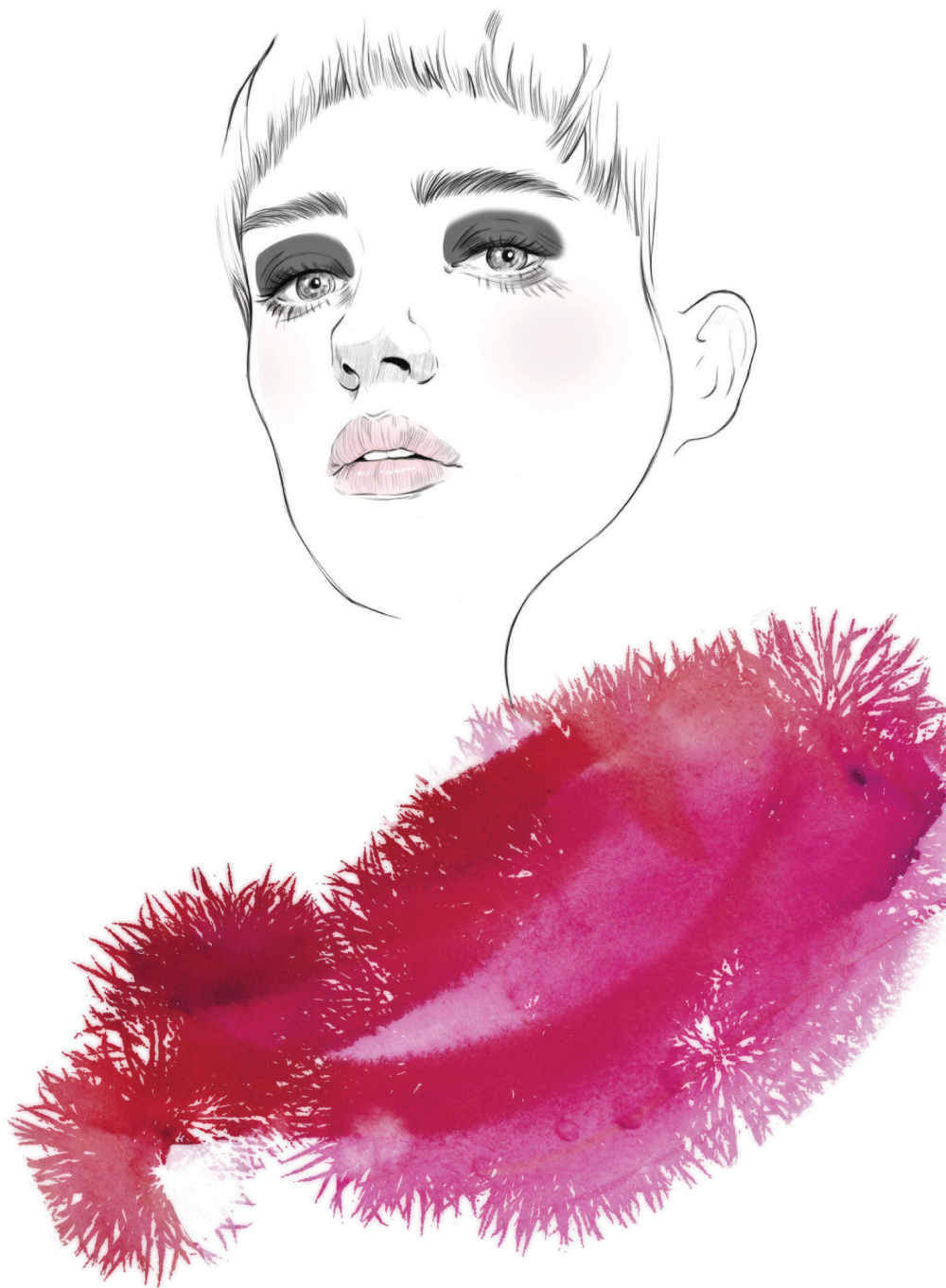


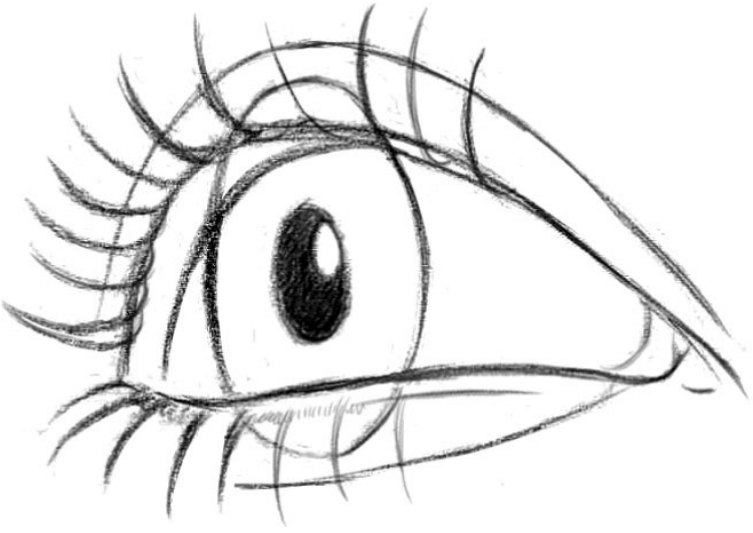
The circular curves of the eyeball and eye socket are still present when the eye is closed.



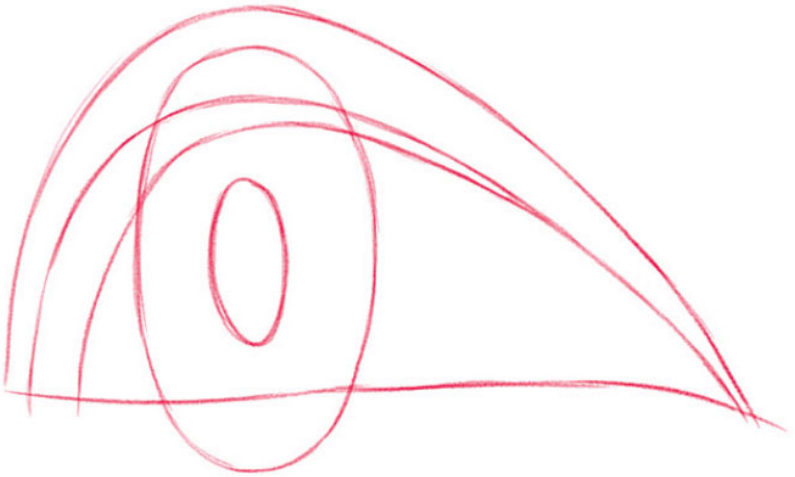
Hair and beauty illustration for Braun packaging project, 2016

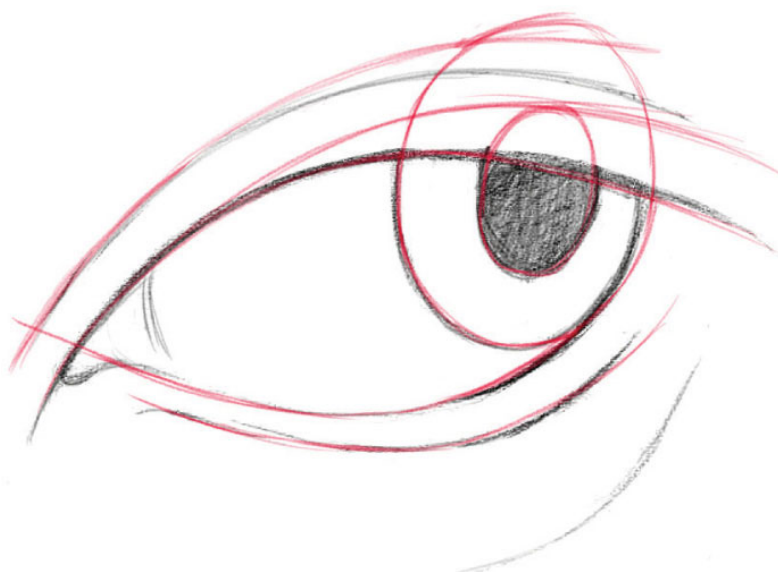
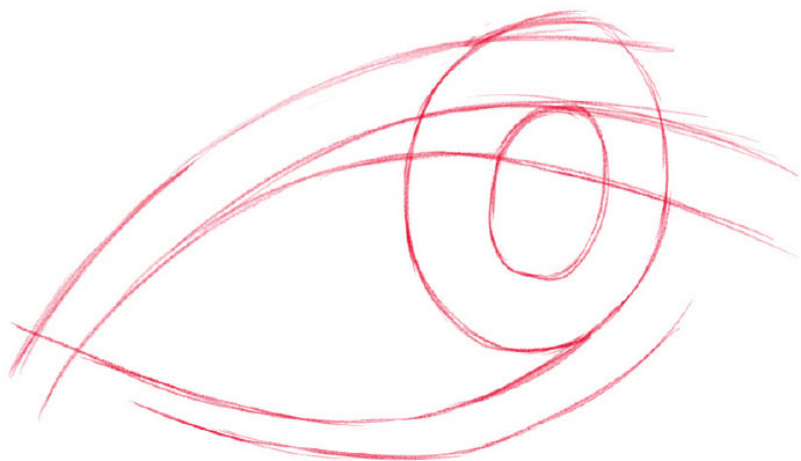


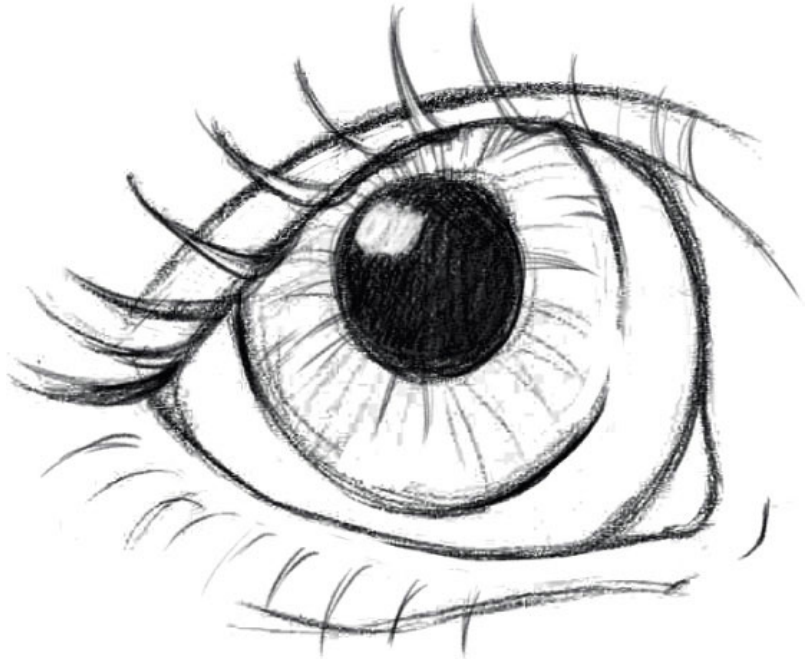




Practice using these diagrams to help you understand the shape of the eye and the position of the iris when seen from an angle, above, or below (as when casting a sideward glance).







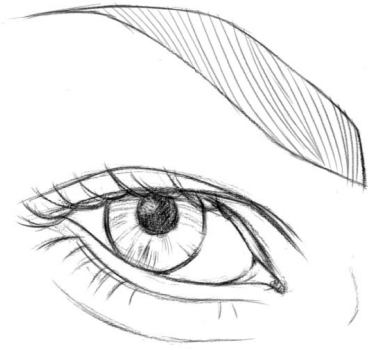
The shape of the eye can reveal a person's age. The iris fills more space in a child's eye than in an adult's.



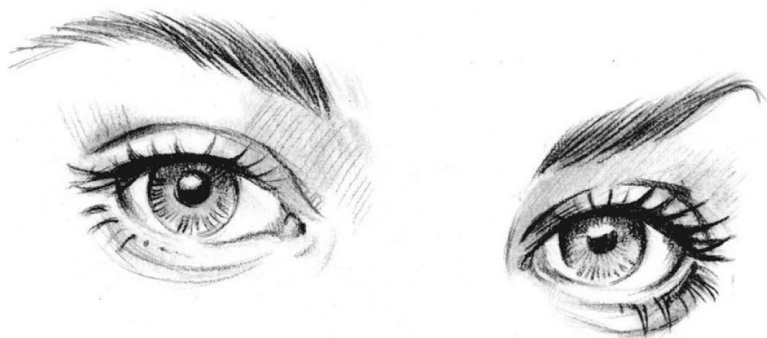
Older faces contain soft folds around the eyelids, as shown here, making the eyes seem narrower. Mature faces are full of beautiful character.



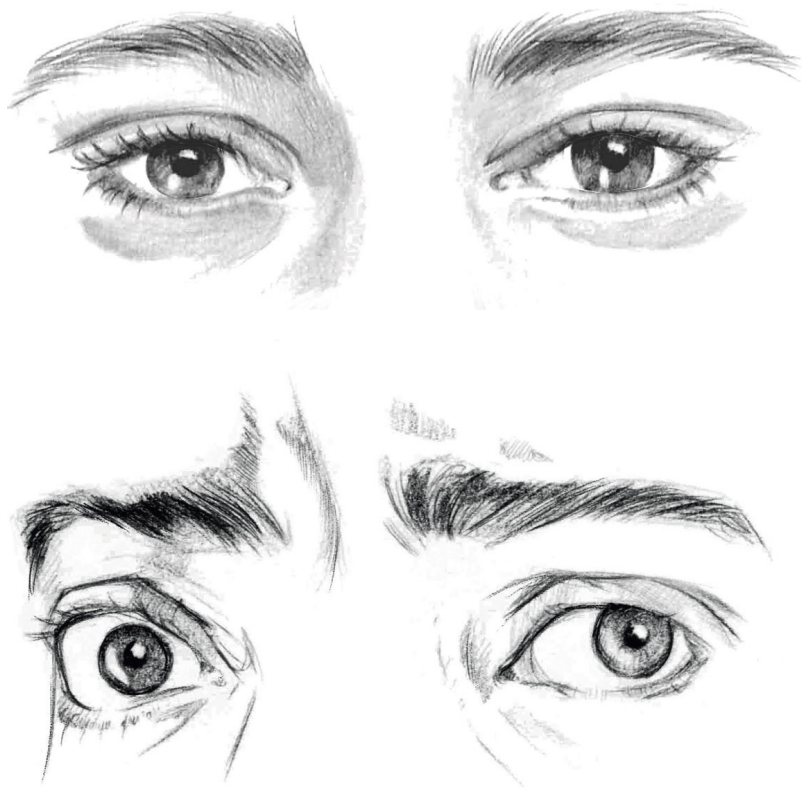
Note how the shape of the eyes changes with the face positioned slightly downward.

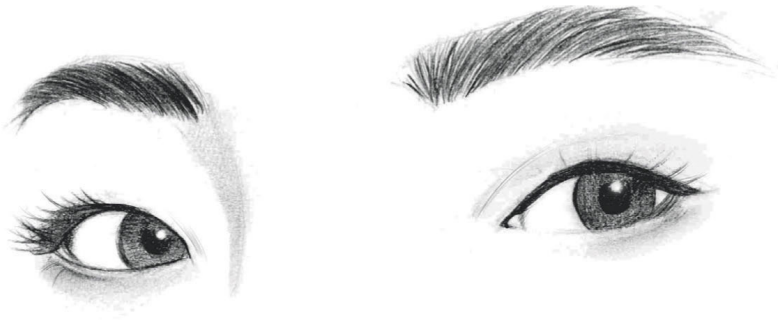




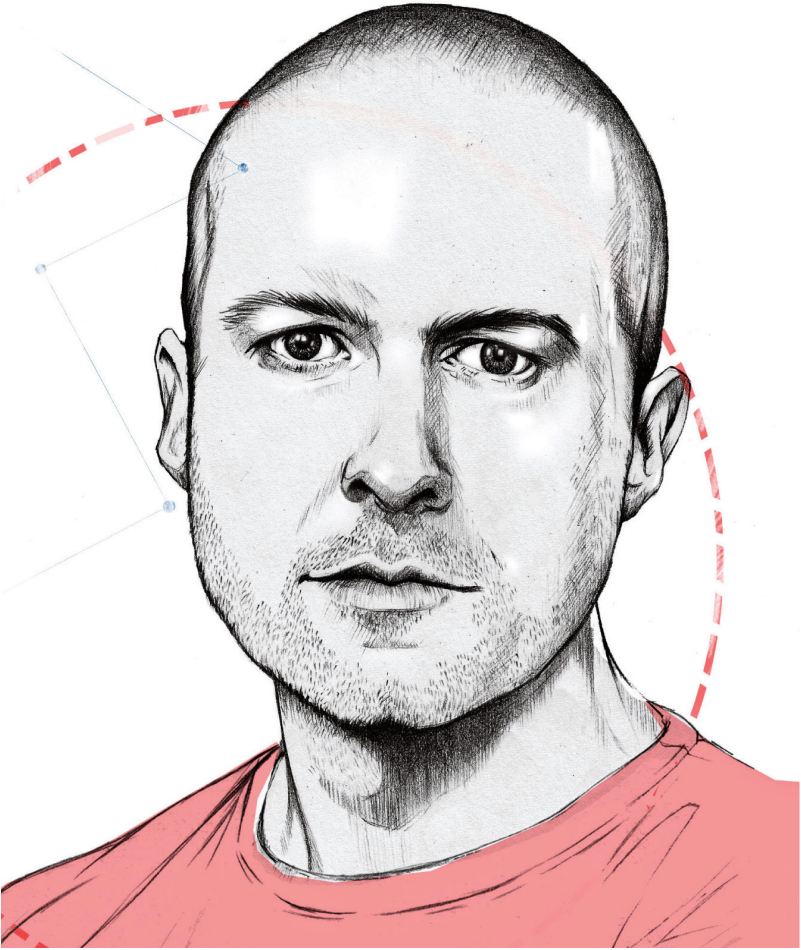


Pay attention to the growth pattern and direction of the eyebrow hairs and eyelashes in each portrait you draw. They will be different for each person and will help you establish likeness and character.





Devrim Haynes, in collaboration with the artist, 2006



Jony Ive, commissioned by *T3* magazine

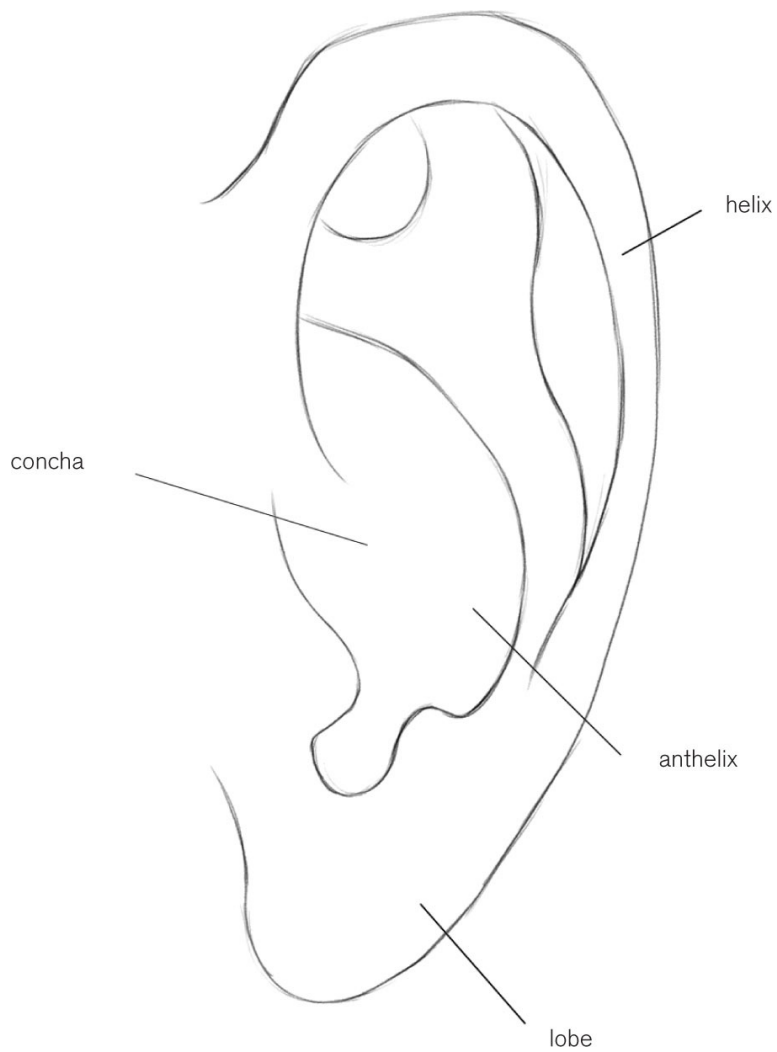
THE EARS

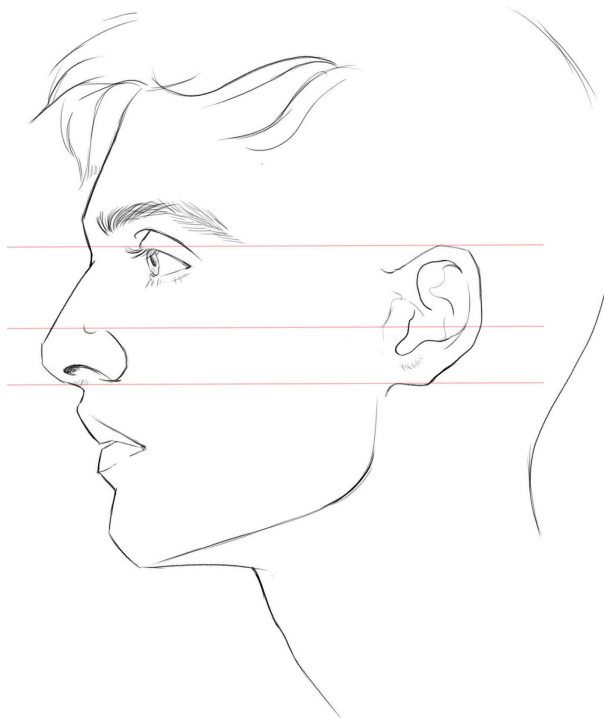
Ears are unique in shape and size from one person to the next. They are also quite a complex form, and many artists simplify them in their drawings. Constructed mostly with curved lines, they are a lovely facial feature to master.



Alex Gibney, *Paddle Against the Flow*

EAR DIAGRAM

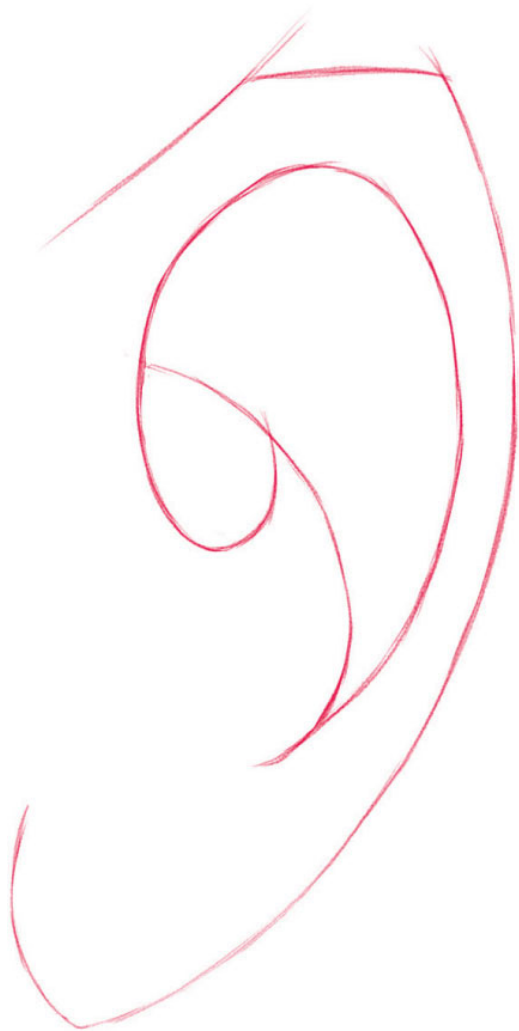


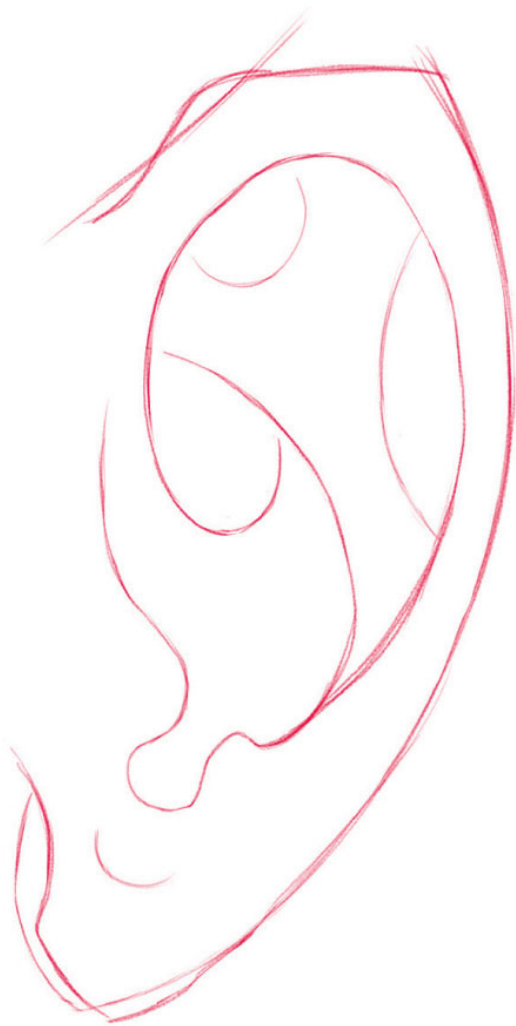


With the head in profile, you can see the relationship of the ear to the rest of the face.



Here is a very simple, step-by-step guide to help you draw a common ear shape.





When rendering the ear, note where the light source is. If you apply the lights and darks well, you will draw wonderfully realistic ears to be proud of—especially when you call on what you’ve learned while drawing from memory or imagination.





Observe how a slight difference in perspective in drawing an ear makes the antihelix—the interior part—appear to protrude.





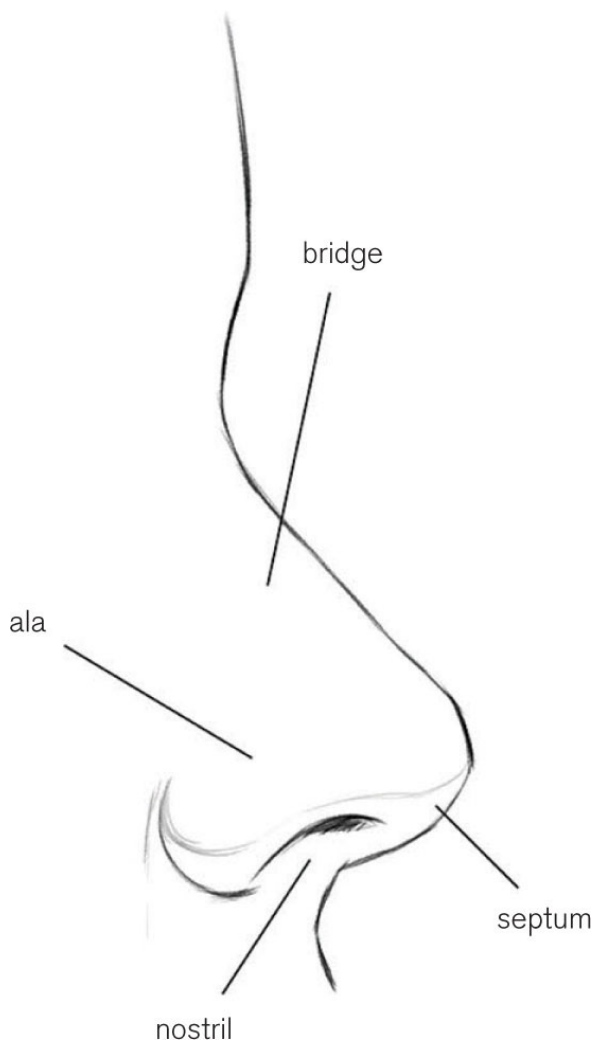
In this drawing, you can see the simplicity of the form of the ear shown from behind. The helix and lobe form a lovely *S* shape. Start by drawing a straight line as a guide from the top to the bottom of the ear.





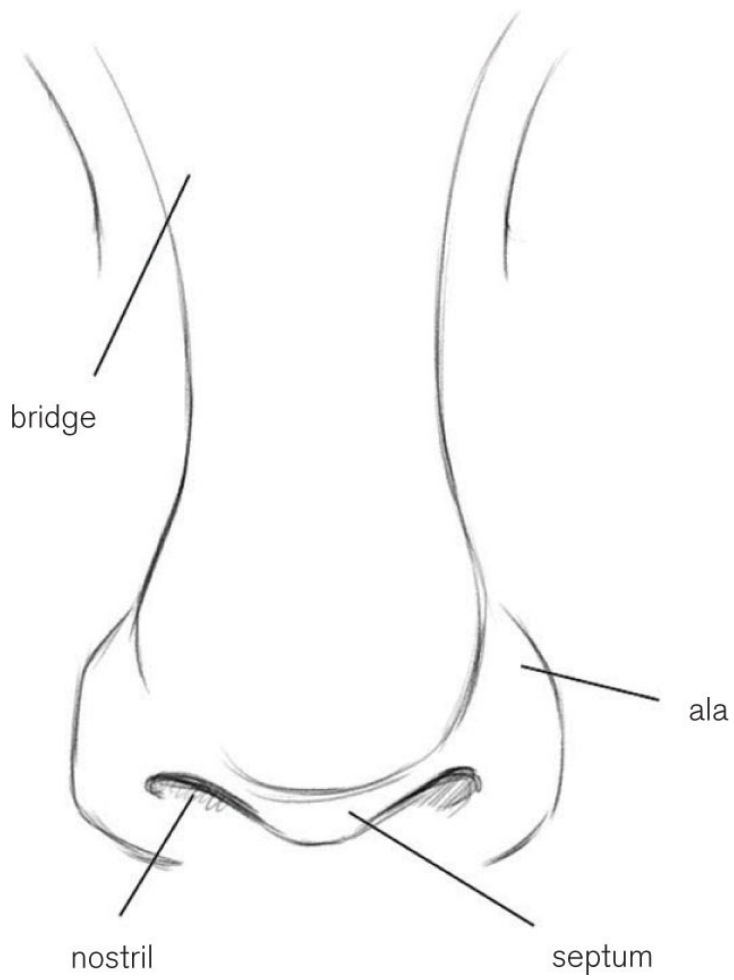
THE NOSE

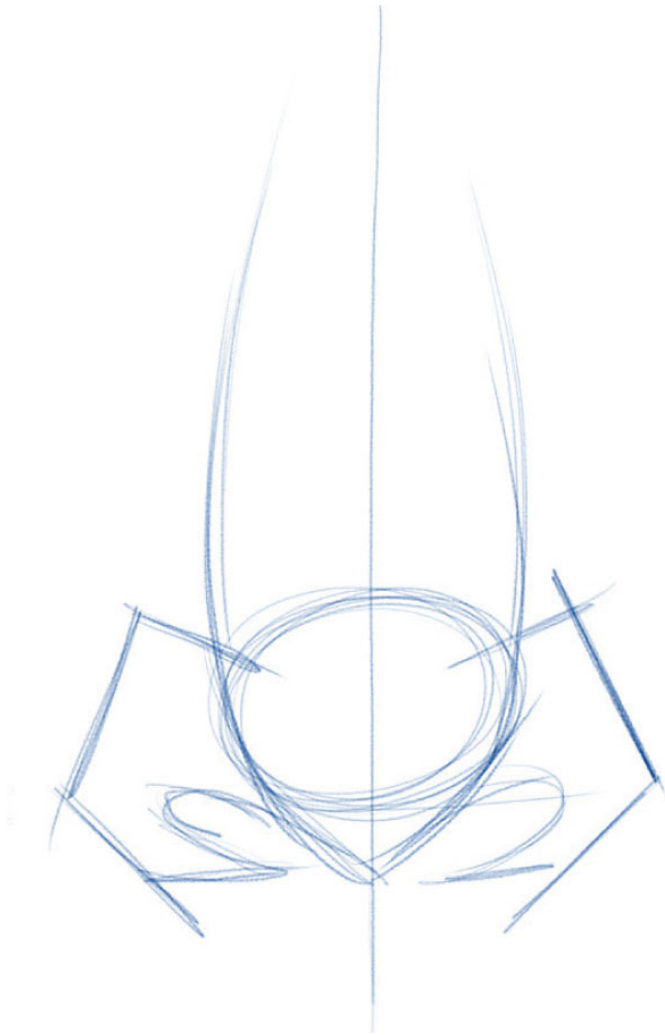
Drawing the nose can be frustrating for some people, but with these simple steps, you'll master the feature quickly enough.



TIP:

If you get stuck in a drawing, move on to another and come back to the first one later. You'll find that fresh eyes can solve issues very quickly, and you'll keep the momentum of drawing and learning.

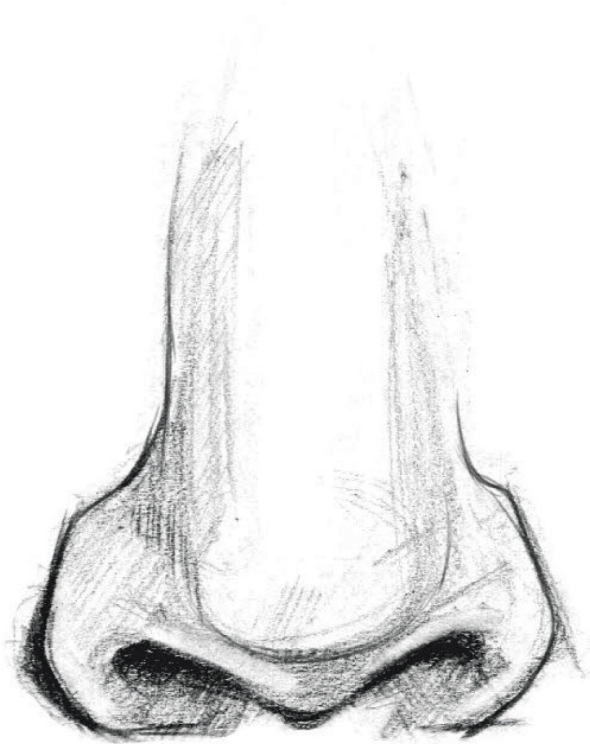




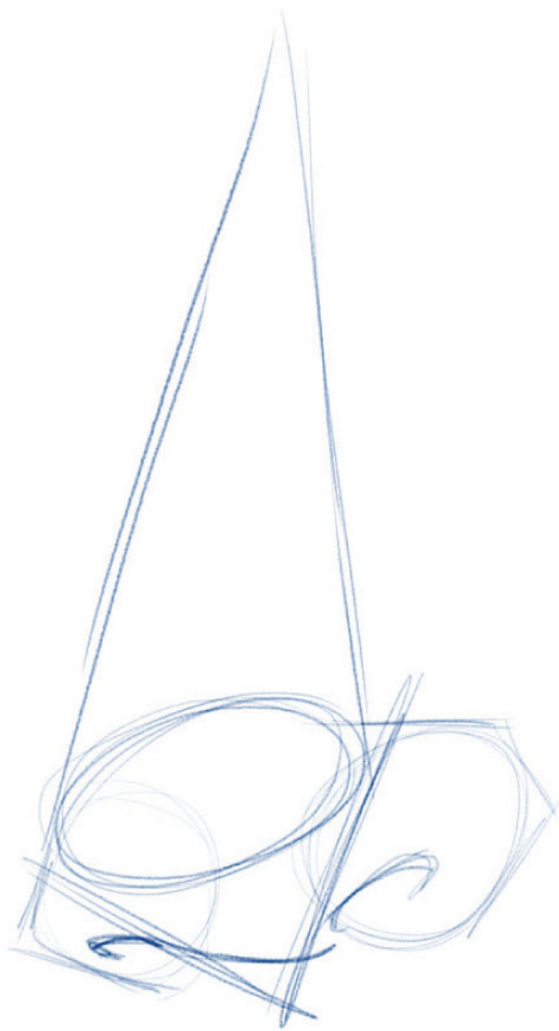
A horizontal oval masks the three-dimensional tip of the nose. Add a vertical line that splits the oval in half to guide the left-right symmetry of the nose. The shape of the outer nostril (called the ala) is a little like a lobster claw. A horizontal line drawn across the bottom of the nose tip connects the nostril to the ala.



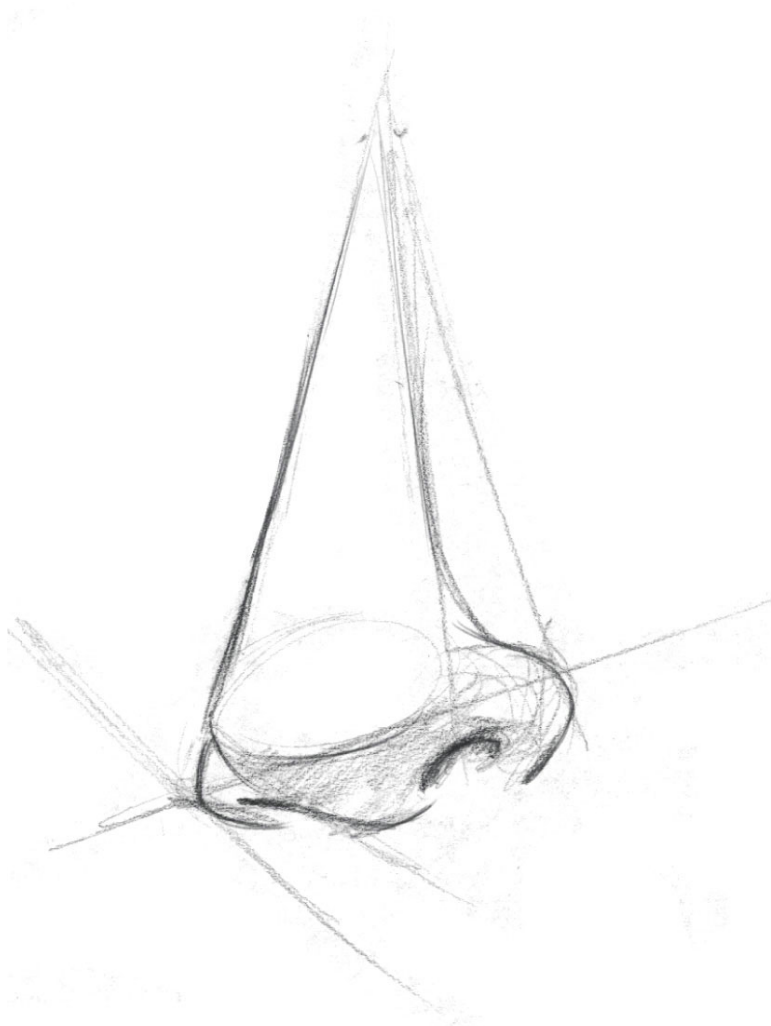
See how darker lines smooth the framework of the guidelines. The curves create the “skin” of the nose. Use a putty eraser to lighten your original guidelines.



Shadows and highlights create the contours and give the nose its three-dimensional form. Notice how the dark shading in the nostrils becomes less defined toward the bottom. Work with your eraser to softly remove overly dark areas here.

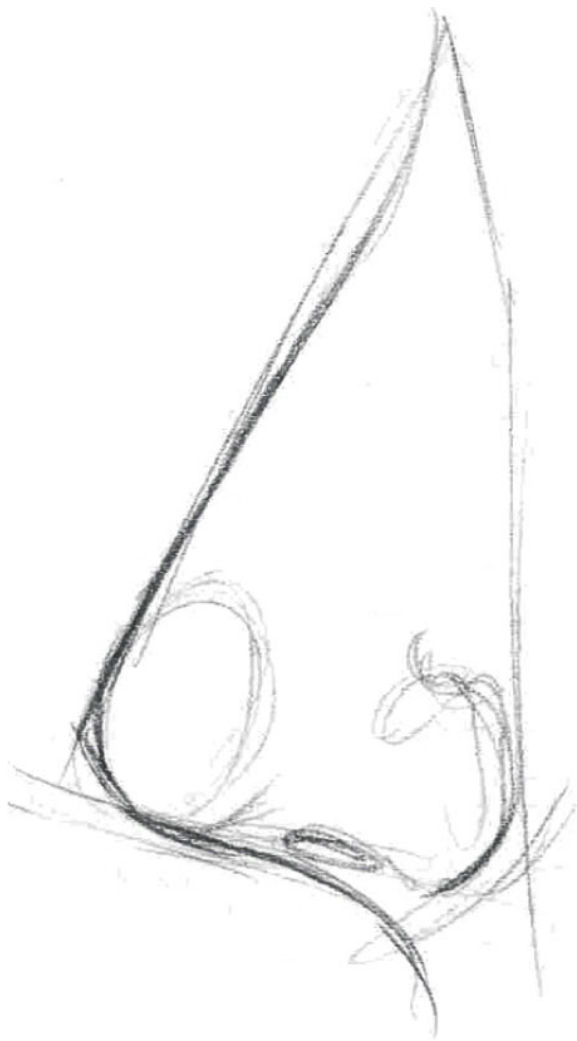


A triangular shape is a good starting point for drawing the nose from an angle. Use a horizontal oval to create the tip and then add the shape of the alas. Although the ala on the left is nearly hidden, draw its guidelines in your initial sketch so that you understand its positioning.

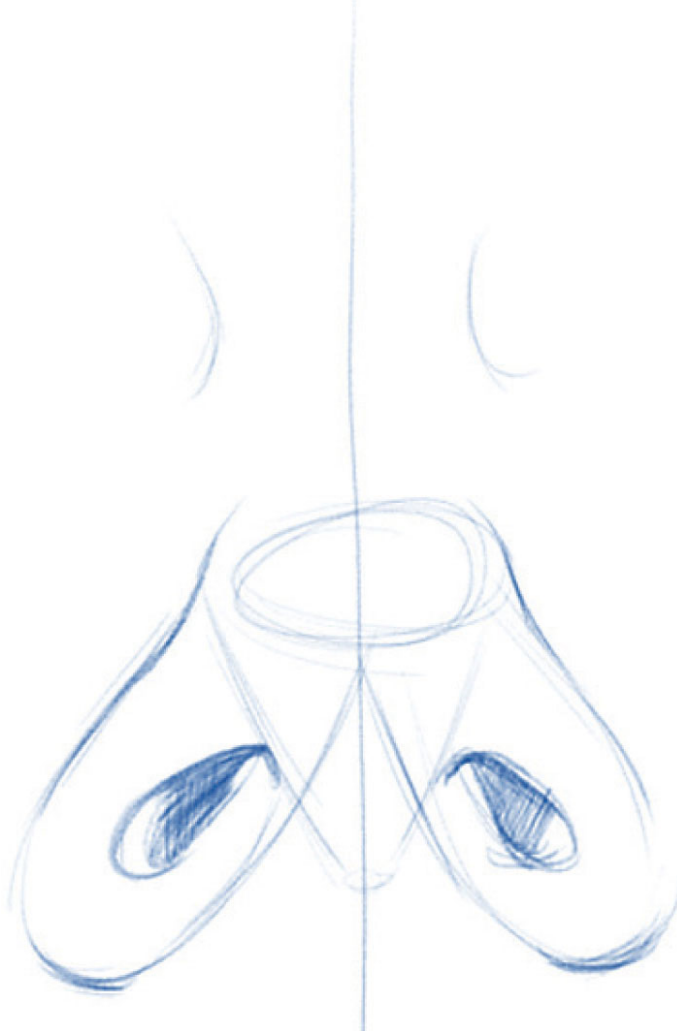


Strengthening the straight lines helps to make the nose appear three-dimensional. The sense of three-dimensionality is enhanced with shading under the tip of the nose.

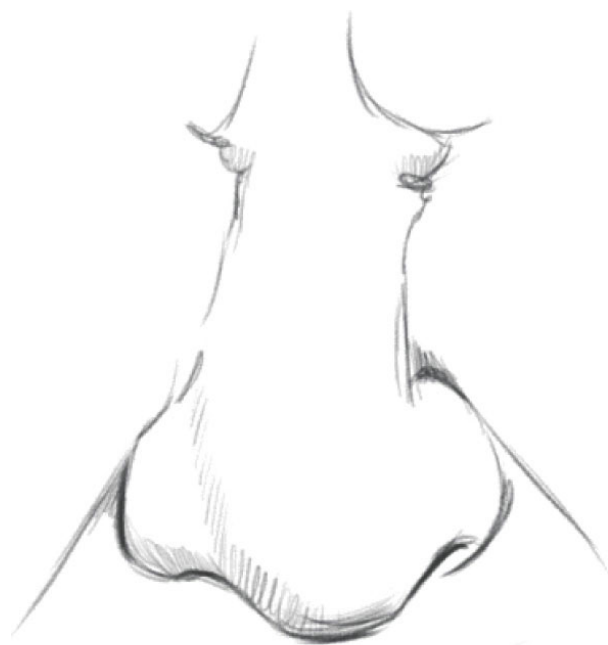
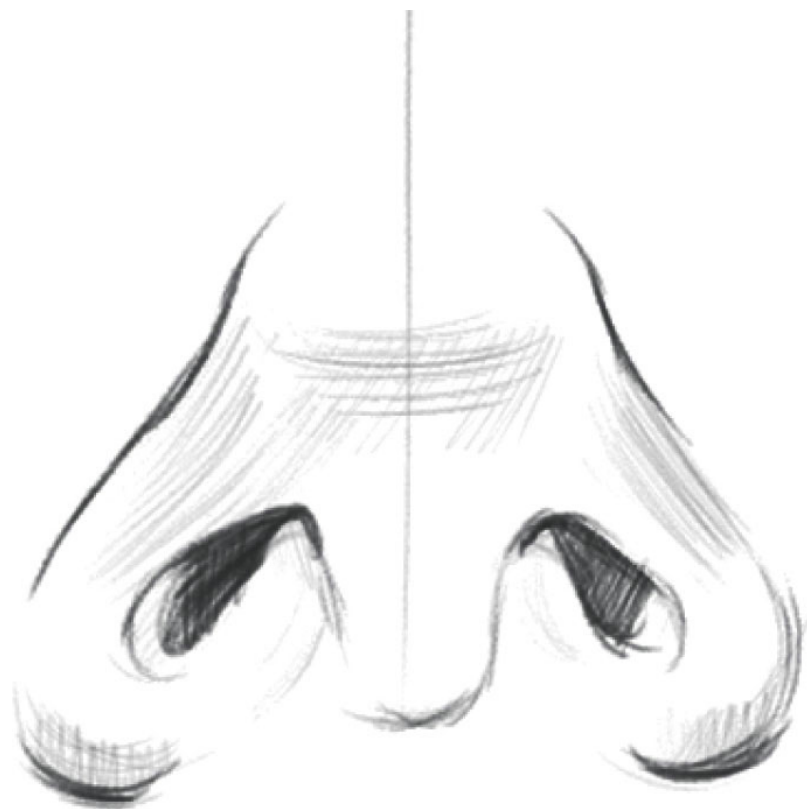




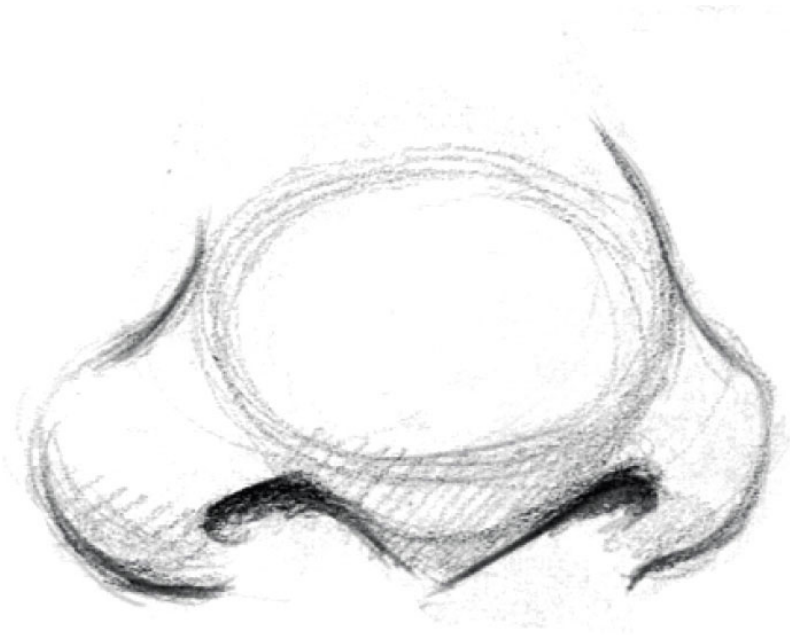
Follow these guides to work on the nose's side structure. The form can be broken down into triangular shapes. The shading has been kept light to keep the form delicate.



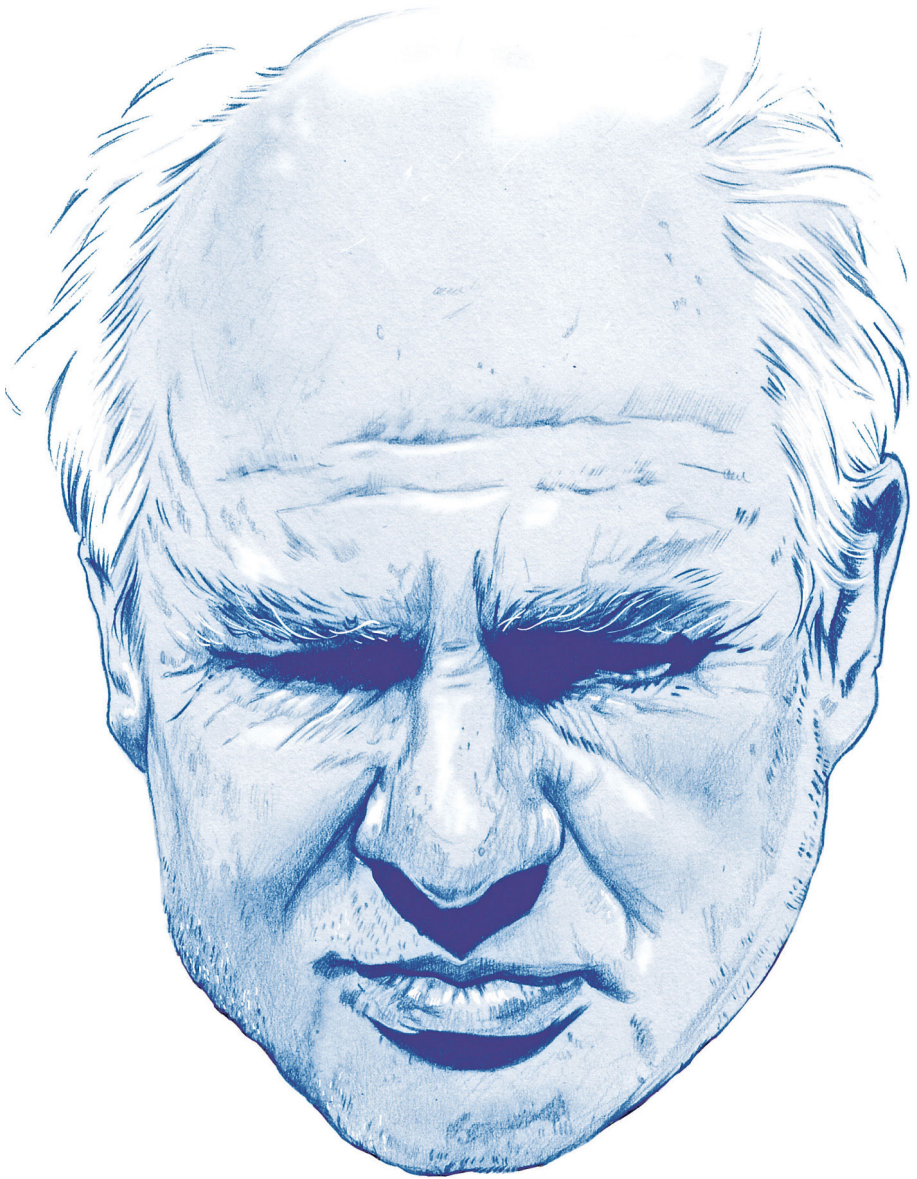
Without a doubt, the trickiest position for drawing the nose is with the head angled backward. It requires foreshortening of the nose and a lot of focus on the nostrils.



Notice the differences in nose shapes in these drawings of an older male's nose and a child's. With the older nose, you can see how the tip is lower than the ala and the side-to-side symmetry is less evident.



In the child's nose, notice that the nose tip is dominant, and the ala sits wider on the face. Remember, this is just a guide, as noses—even in infants—are not identical.



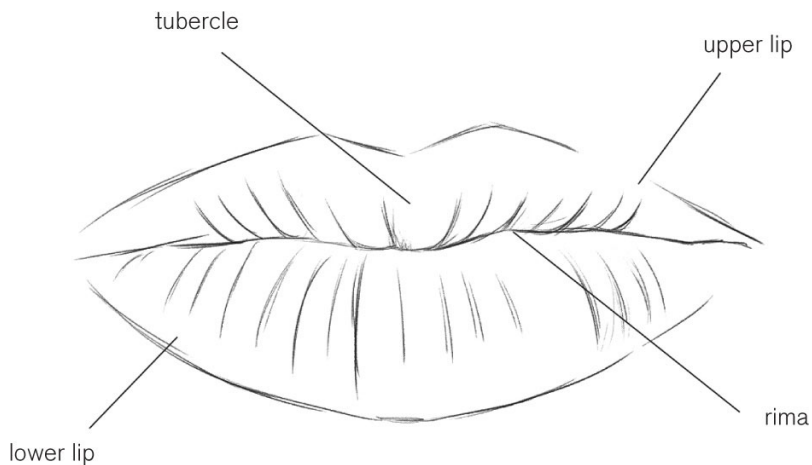
Kalle Lasn, *Paddle Against the Flow*



Raheem Sterling, *T3* magazine

THE MOUTH

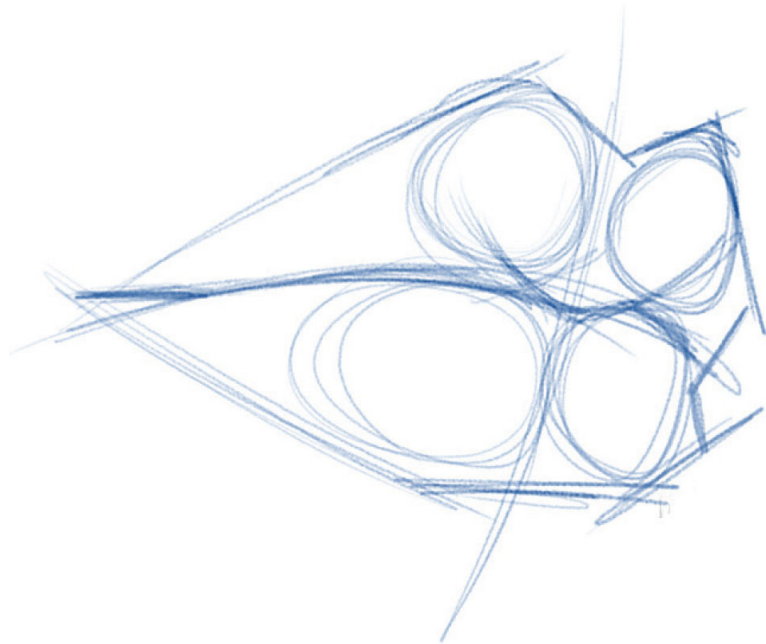
As one of the most expressive parts of the face, the mouth can animate a portrait, giving us an insight into our sitter's personality, mood, or frame of mind. It's a feature to be studied and scrutinized in great detail.



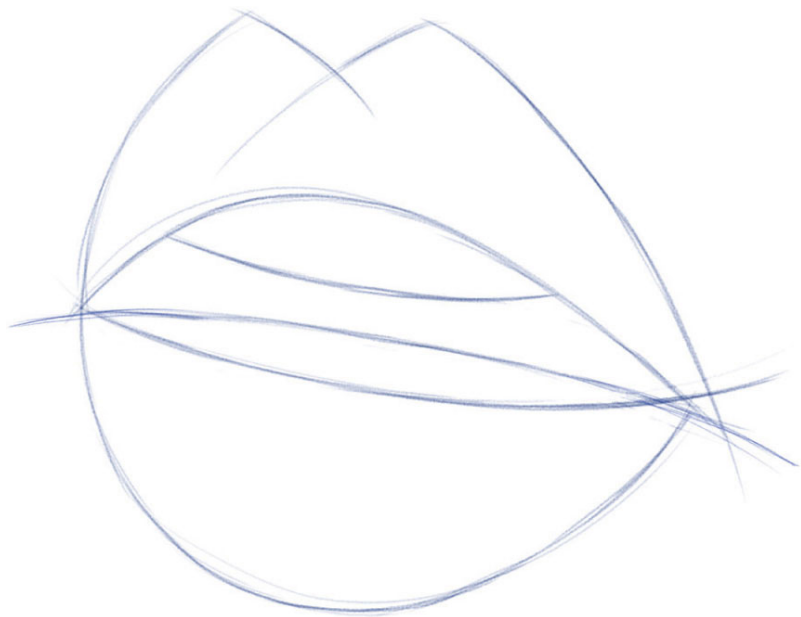


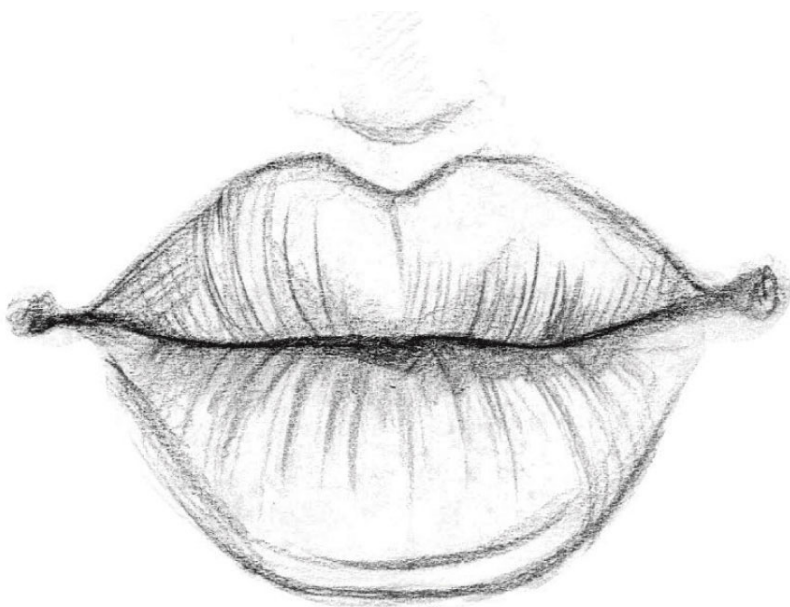
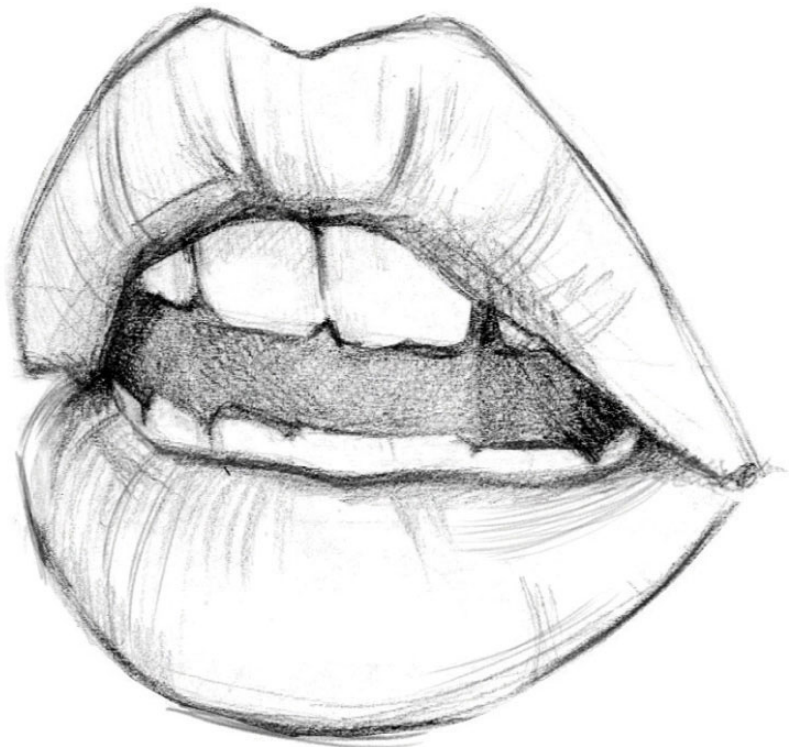


The vertical line helps position the nose, lips, and chin in relation to one another.

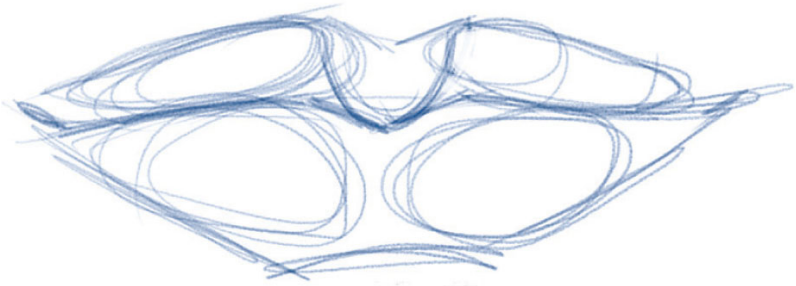
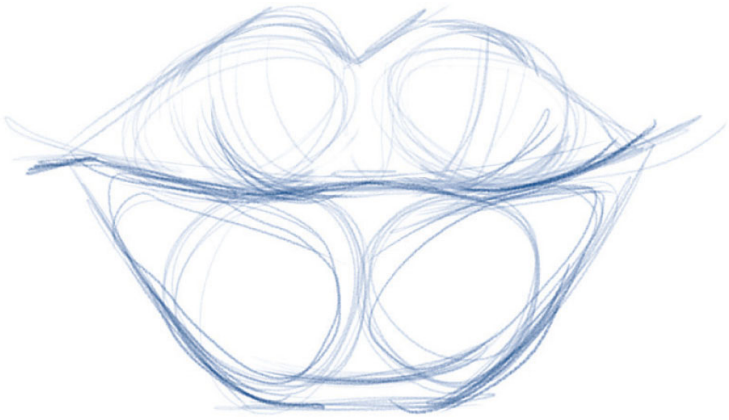


I've created a collection of lips for you to draw using simple geometric construction lines. The top lip is often wider than the bottom, but this is only a guideline. Remember to draw what you see—not what you *think* you see.

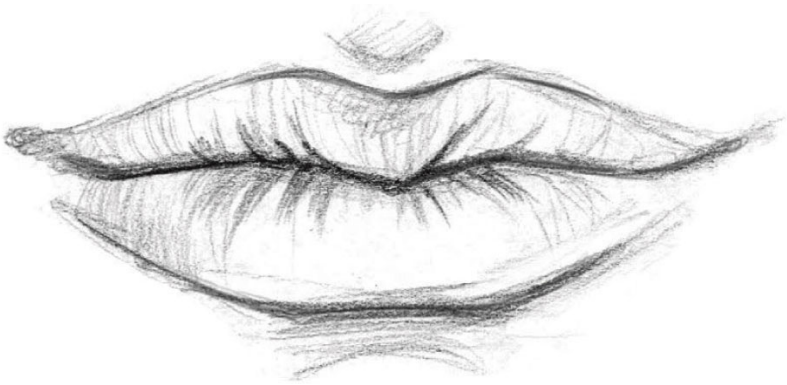




African teenager's lips



Adult male lips



The contours of the lips can be drawn as soft curved strokes. The length of the curved strokes changes as you move from the corners of the mouth to the center.



Young Somali man's lips

TIP:

To illustrate different tones in a feature, layer your pencil marks rather than using different pressures.

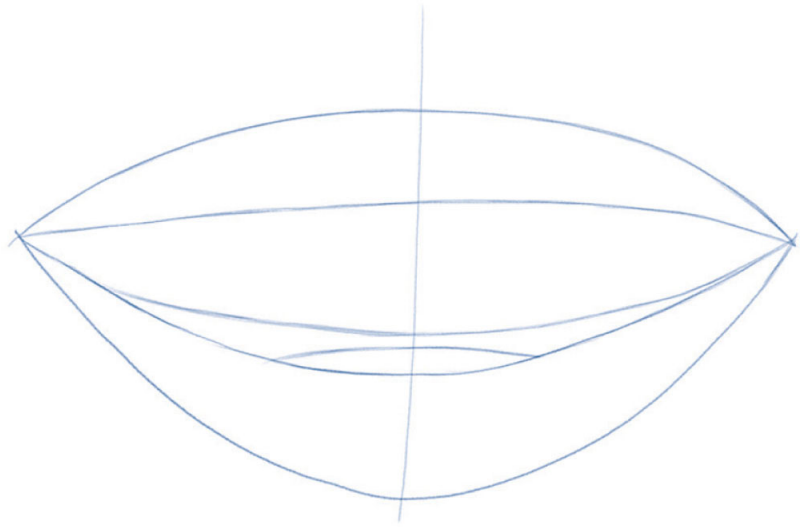
Be careful when drawing the line that separates the lips. Build the line up and be sure to acknowledge the shading as well as the dark parting. Notice the difference in the line between the child's lips and the older person's lips.



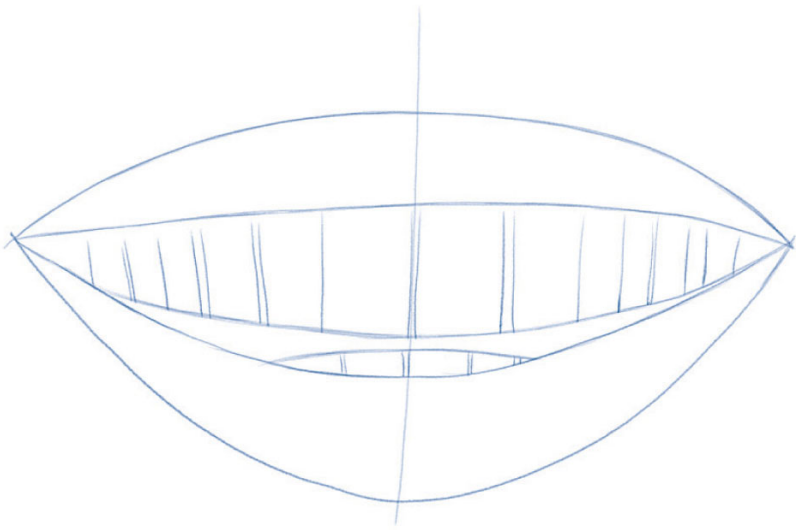
Lips of an elderly woman



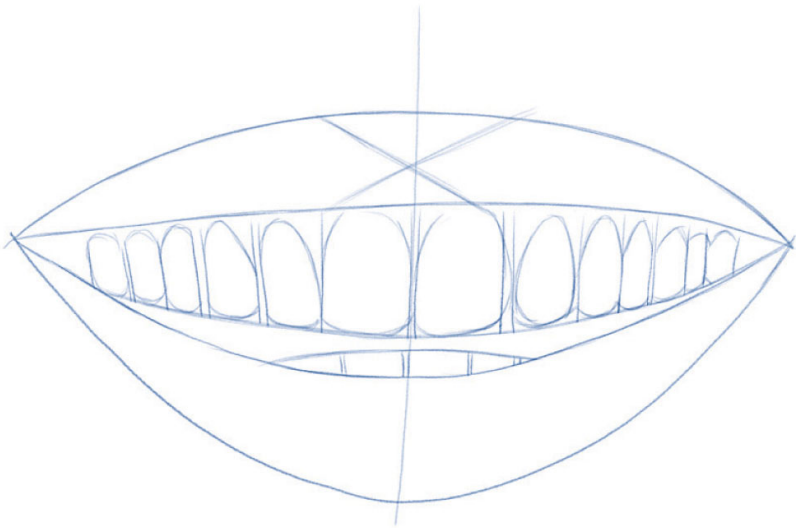
Lips of a young child



Teeth can sometimes make a portrait appear busy. You can reduce this problem by drawing the teeth as a soft rendering, rather than using hard definitive lines. Look at the shadow created by the top lip and also the soft contours of the mouth.



To draw a mouth with the teeth exposed, begin with basic guidelines. Start with the two front teeth. Then, following the vertical line, draw the teeth on either side, making them appear smaller as they recede toward the back of the mouth. To further the appearance of depth, add a little shading where the teeth meet the lips and at the corners of the mouth.





With the guidelines in, you're ready to start outlining the teeth. If your guidelines are too dark, use a putty eraser. Use light contour lines to create three-dimensionality in the lips and to give them a little color, which will allow the teeth to appear whiter.

EXPRESSIONS

The eyes and mouth are key to facial expression. This is when understanding the muscles of the face is important. When drawing these facial poses, continue to sketch in guidelines to place the facial features as shown earlier in this book.



In this exaggerated expression, the muscles in the forehead raise eyebrows high and lift the eyes to expose more of the full, round iris. The woman's pursed lips extend and push closer to the nose. This is definitely not a subtle pose.



In this expression, the downturned mouth creates dimpled lines in the jowls. Be careful when you draw such lines; keep them soft so they don't look too harsh. Lines in the face don't really exist as much as we think. That's why the pupils of the eye and the eye makeup stand out as dramatically darker.

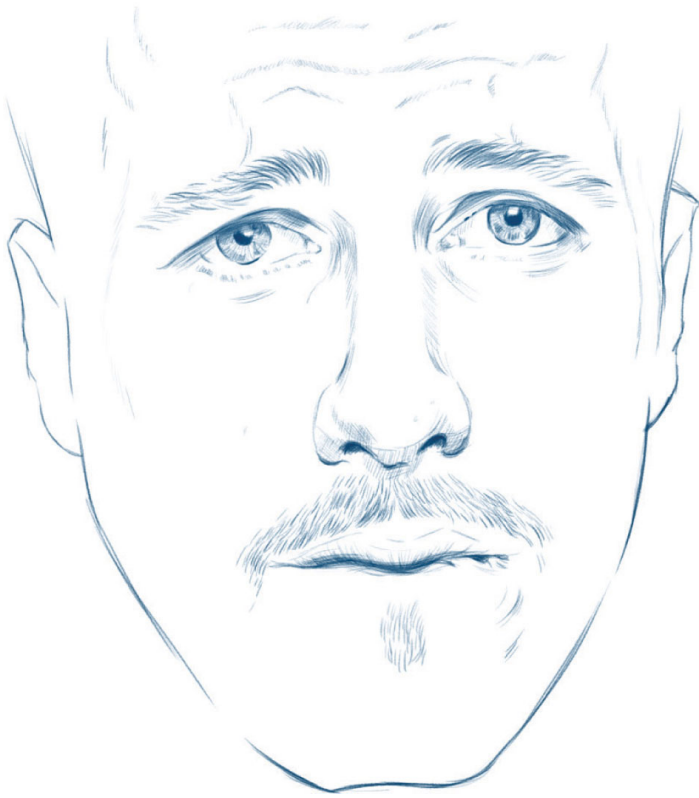
Note: Extreme contrasts between light and shadow in a face can create the appearance of sharp lines that aren't really there.



In this look of concern, the eyes open wide, lifting the forehead into wrinkles and causing a crease between the eyebrows.

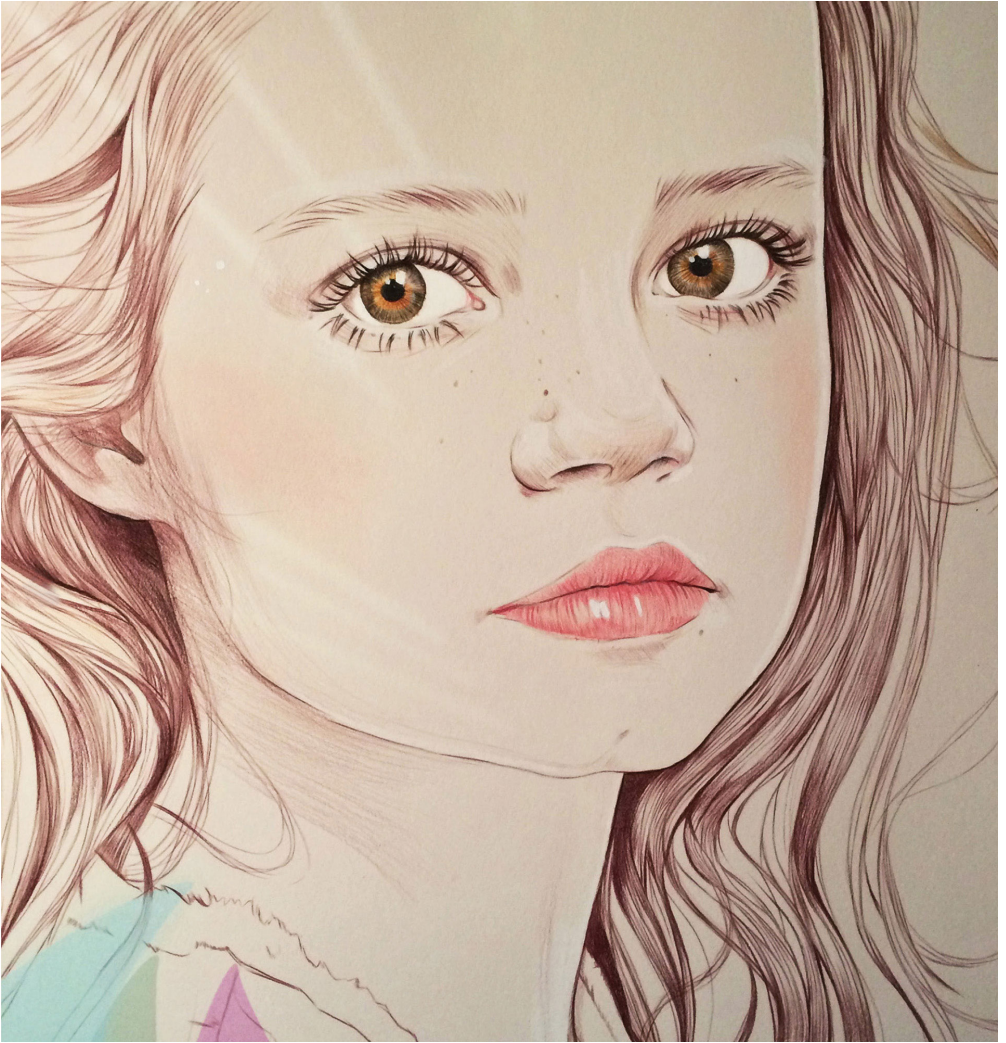
TIP:

To practice drawing expressions, take photos of your own face and your friends' faces in exaggerated poses and work from those. Always use your guidelines to place the position of the features.



The downward slope of the eyebrows in this drawing adds dramatically to the expression in the eyes. Look for those subtle details in a face to help you capture the mood—in this case, the face is communicating a sense of anxiety or worry. The contours of the lip become very different here as the bottom lip isn't visible because it is being held in the teeth. There is a slight shadow and creasing of the skin which is subtle but shows the expression well. Try drawing this mouth and capturing the emotion.

SKIN TONES AND HAIR



SKIN TONES

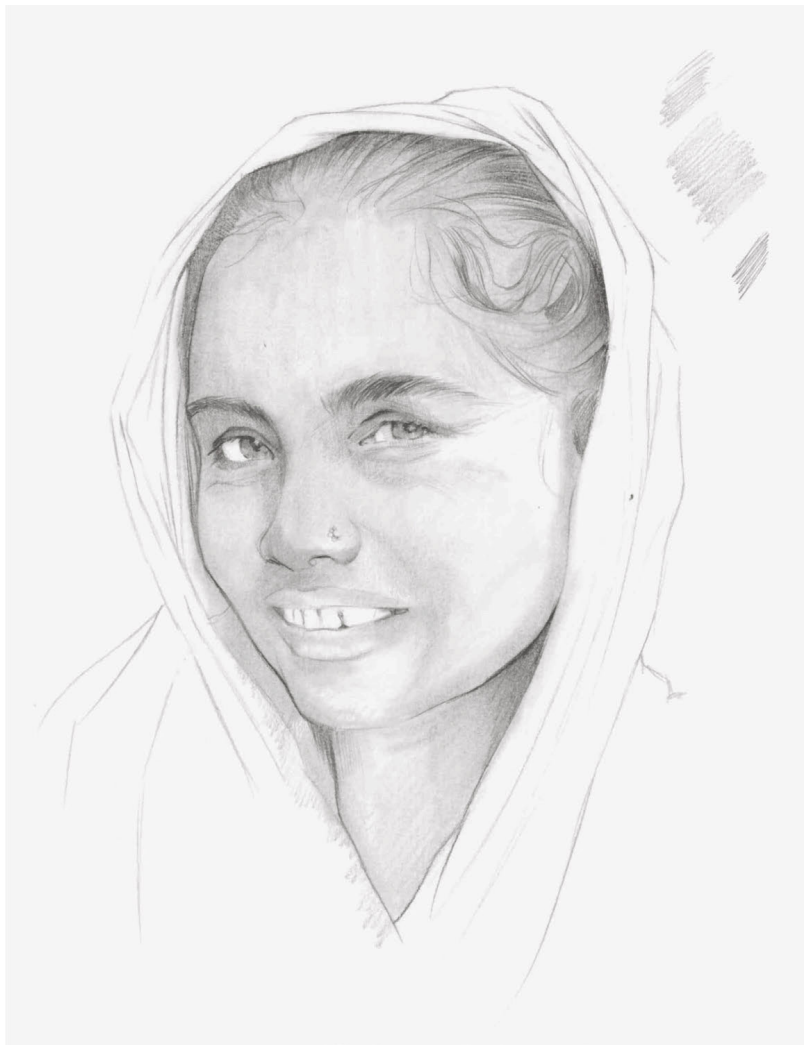
In this portrait of a young Bangladeshi woman, I wanted to highlight the softness of her skin. I used a smudging technique with pencil, which can create a range of subtle to dramatic chiaroscuro effects. With darker skin tones, this is especially lovely.



After softly marking in the outlines of the face and fabric folds, I used a retractable pencil with a thicker lead. Using the lead on the side, I made soft directional strokes across the face, adding more pencil where there was more shadow. You can see this where the hair meets the fabric and also between the nose and cheeks.



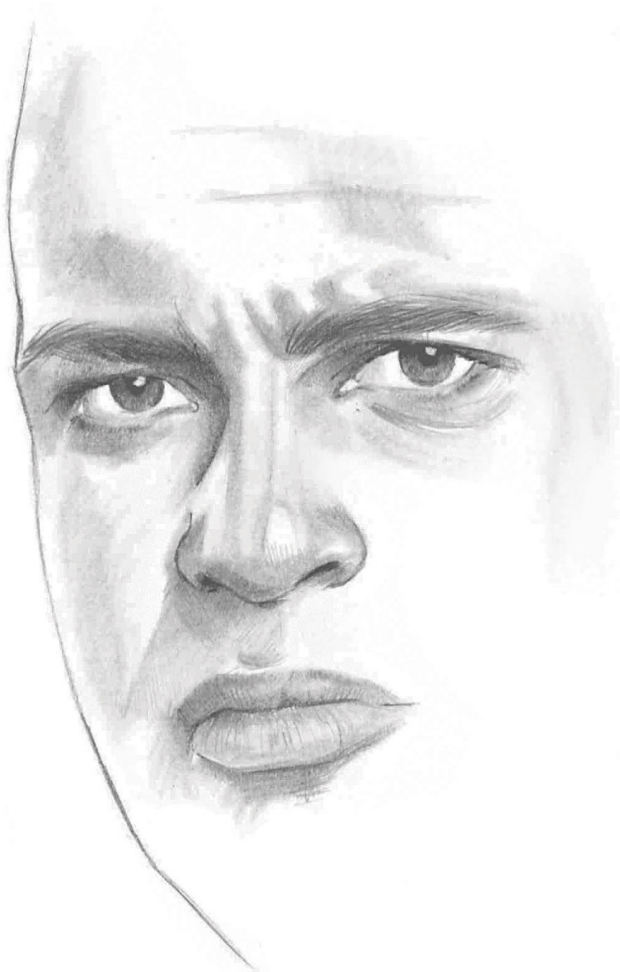
Using a blending stump, I've carefully blended the lines but made sure there is still a soft tonal difference in the different areas.



I've reinstated the lines of the eyes, nose, lips, and hair on top of the soft, smudged area.



Using an eraser, I've removed areas of pencil to create highlights on the left side of the face and the top of the lip, for a sharper contrast. I added very fine facial creases with a soft but fine lead (0.3 mm, 2B) and used the same pencil to detail the jewelry, teeth, and hairlines.



Here's another skin tone example. In this expression, the furrowed eyebrows create contours on his face that pick up the light.



On pale skin, adding tone to the shadows is effective in creating dimension to the bridge of the nose and lower lip. Again, keep lines soft.

HAIR

Hair relates in many different ways to the face, depending on its length, texture, thickness, cut, and color. Here is an exercise to start you on your mastery of drawing realistic hair by looking at how it grows and falls around the part.



Start with basic oval for the face. When you draw your vertical guideline down the center of the face, continue the line up and over the top of the head. I've used a dotted line for the part and marked the hairline at the top of the forehead in red.



Sketch a basic guideline for the overall outline of the hair. Add shaped lines to position the features of the face and chin line. Notice how the hair falls forward over the forehead, lifts as it moves away from the part on top, curves in toward the chin, and curls at the tip. Use a darker line to capture the shape and flow of the hair.

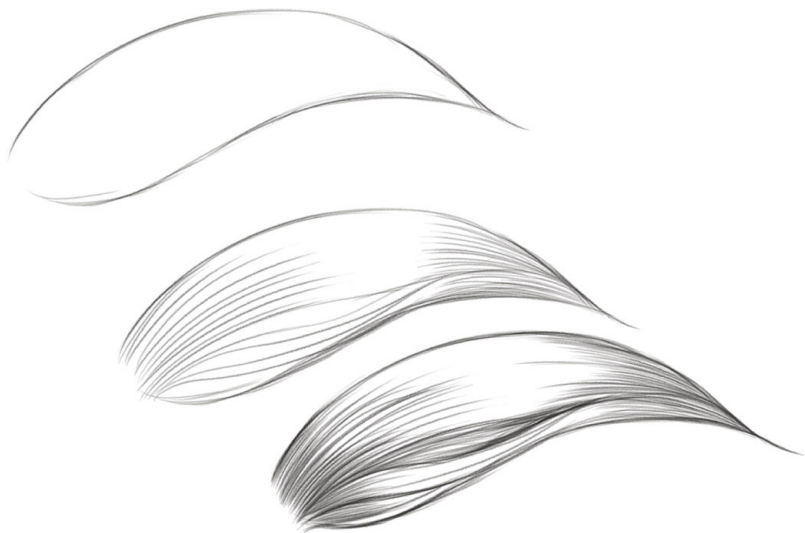


Now, you can add defining wisps of hair, waves of collected strands, and the loose, separated ends. The part in the hair is acknowledged but kept soft with strands of hair crossing and covering it in places.

RENDERING

In drawing hair, you might find it easiest to approach it by rendering individual tresses or waves. Build lines in these sections to create the full head of hair. Here's how to do it in three steps.

1. Start with a basic shape that represents a section or wave of hair.
2. Begin rendering the individual strands with light strokes at either end of the wave. This illustrates how the hair will appear darker at the roots and at the ends and lighter where it curves up in the center and reflects a light source.
3. Add a range of tones, from dark shadows at the roots to the midtones leading to the center, and leave the untouched highlight in the center. You can see a kink in the section where it divides and exposes darker hair underneath. This gives a realistic hint that there are many fine strands beneath the surface. Keep thinking midtones, highlights, and shadows.



TIP:

Understanding light is so important to creating realistic hair. Pay attention to how hair will appear darker when closer to the face and neck and be highlighted on top. These shadows and highlights help to create the look of weight and volume in hair.



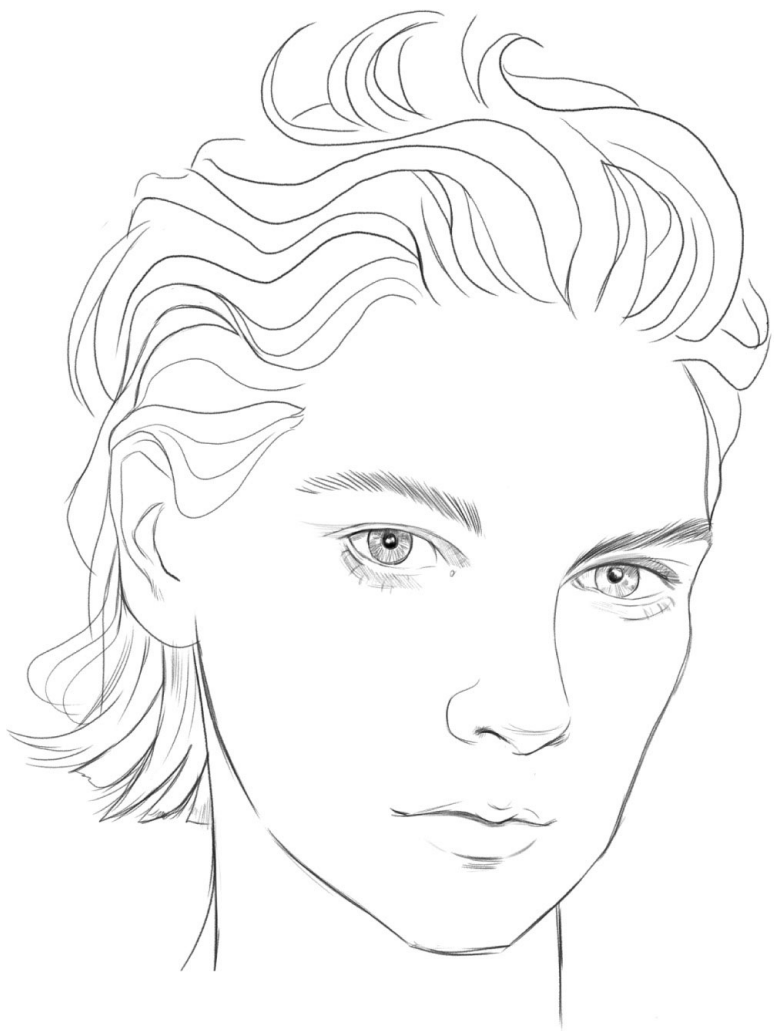
Compare these two steps in rendering. As more tonal lines are added, the wave of hair looks bouncier, and the highlights, reflecting a light source, create a healthy shiny impression.

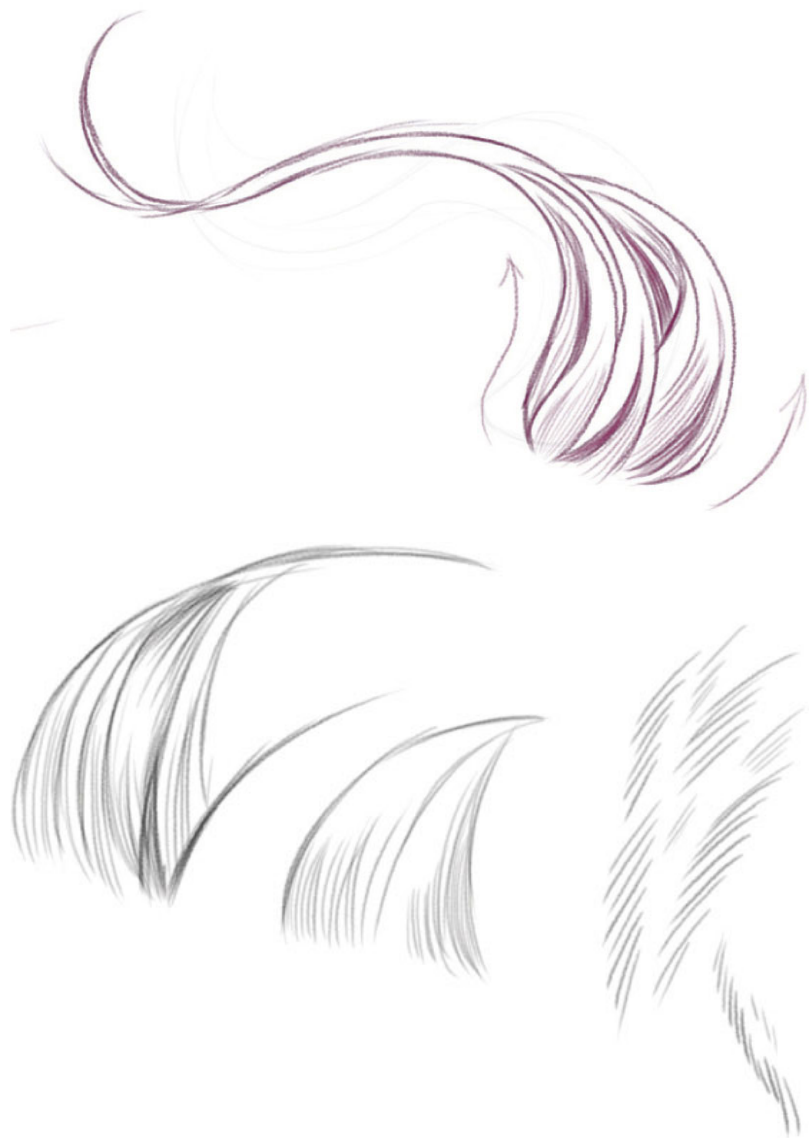


Note: When we draw realistically, we use a set of tricks that re-create our sense of reality even when we work with something as basic as a pencil. Using your knowledge of lighting is great trick, especially when you're working from memory or imagination.

SHORT HAIR

Even when hair is short, it is helpful to draw it by sectioning it into waves. Adding a range of tones to each section creates the sense of volume.





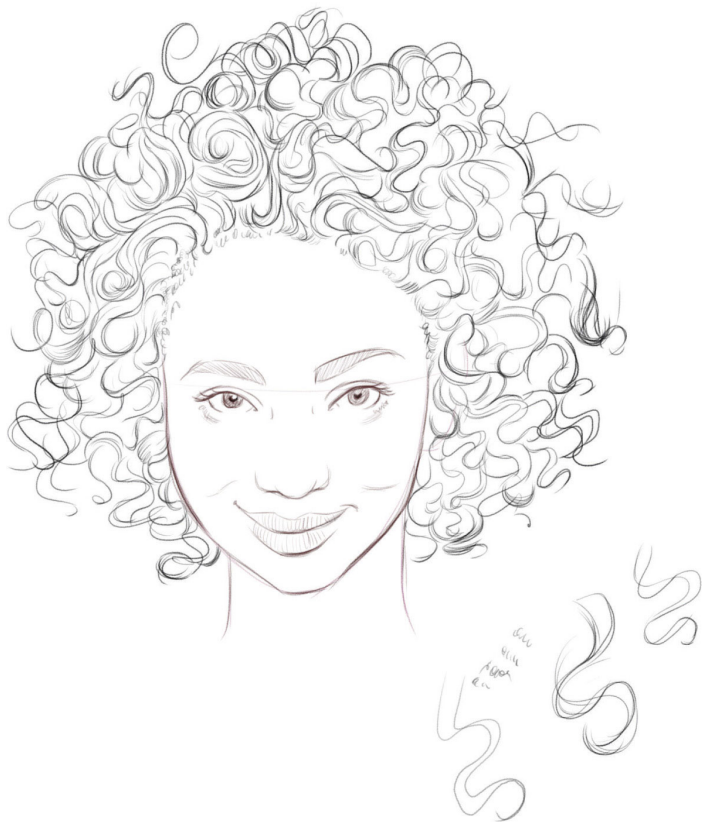
For short hair with a combination of clipped and longer sections, use a range of pencil marks, as shown here.



CURLS



Sketch created in Sri Lanka while sitting above tree plantations watching the sun dip.



When drawing tight, curly hair, make your lines bouncy and soft. You can see the difference in the two renderings: the image opposite is more suggestive and concentrates on the overall form of the hair. When drawing in more detail, keep the lines varied but of a similar mark, as shown above, to suggest individual curls.

HAIR WEIGHT AND SHAPE

The following steps look at overall hair shape and weight. Notice how the hair responds to the shoulders and collar and let that guide your lines.



Start with your guidelines. In this drawing, the ear is important because the hair gathers behind it and divides into fanlike sections. The position of the neck and uplifted chin help to place the hair back, away from the face.



Clarify the positioning of the strands of hair by adding darker outlines. I've added outlines to the hair below the ear and defined the shape of the hair where it dips behind the head. Introducing the outlines allows the hair to be seen in clear sections.



I use smaller, tighter pencil lines to define the part in the hair. Notice how the lines are of different lengths at the root. This technique is also used where hair gathers: Look where the hair disappears behind the ear and reemerges below it. The differing length of the pencil strokes helps to create a sense of depth and allows the strand that crosses the top of the ear to “come forward.”



The most difficult parts of the hair are the darker areas underneath. These strands are normally not clear to the eye. Keep shadows and midtones in mind as you build up your pencil stroke.

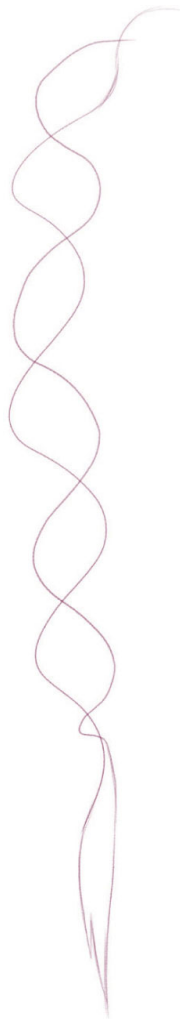
Note: Photographs and online references are great for practice, but don't rely solely on them. To master drawing realistic hair on paper, you need to be a master observer of the people around you.

PLAITS

Learn to represent plaits and you'll be able to draw all sorts of braids and cornrows.



Start with an easy wavy line with a good flow.



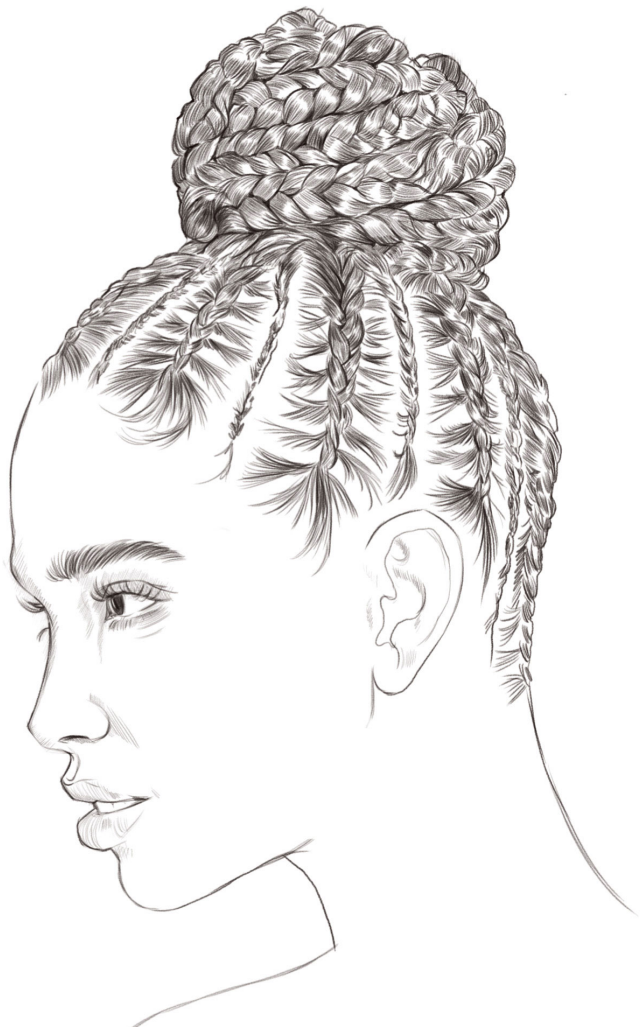
Add another wavy line intersecting the first.



Observe how the wavelike lines make sense for the plait shape.



Now, use the rendering skills you've learned—shadow, midtones, and highlights. Add weight and density with small, layered lines.

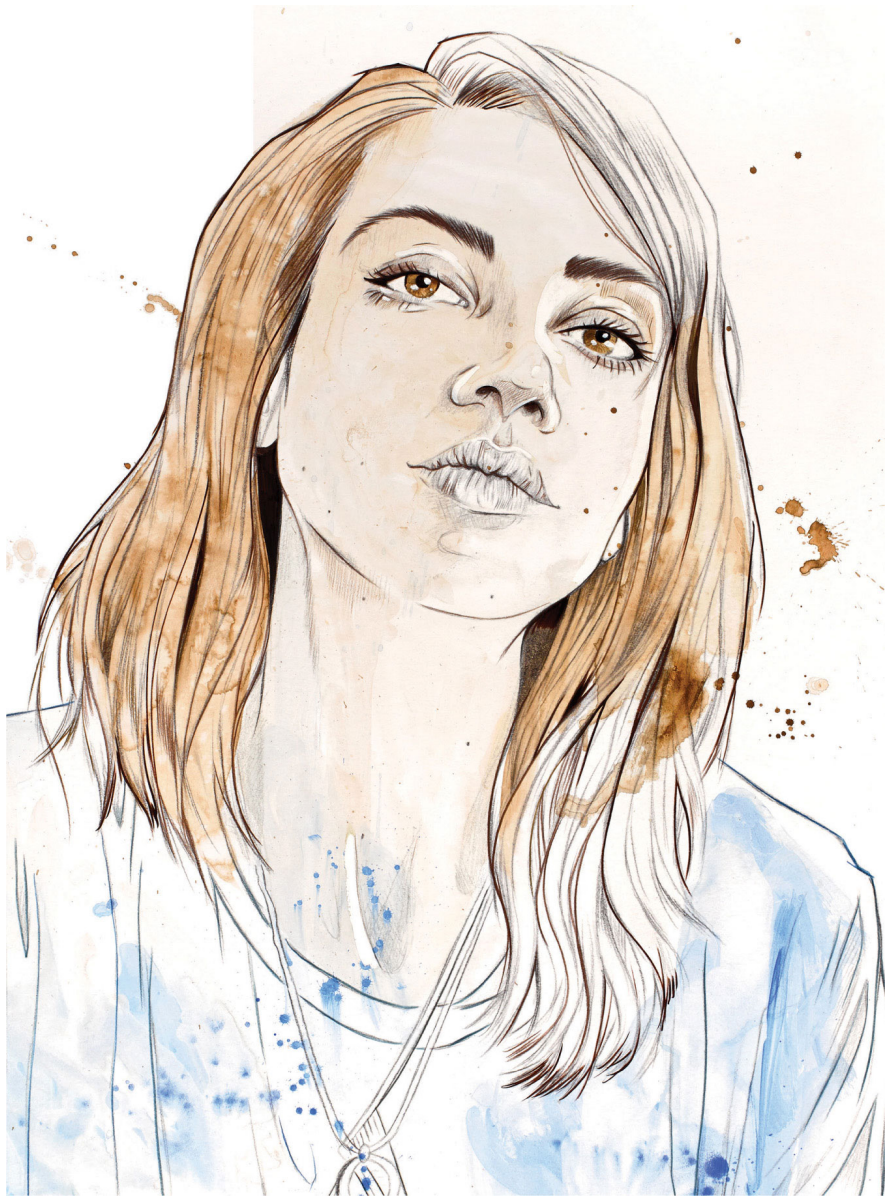




Bold. Miss Led Letters project, 2013.



Snowdrops, 2017



Laura Pannack, watercolor, part of intimate Miss Led debut show, London, 2015

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Joanna Henly, a.k.a. Miss Led, is an artist, illustrator, and art director based in London.

She is known for obsessively detailed and lushly rendered pieces across a wide range of media and scale, including paper, canvas, murals, installation, and digital realms.

As an illustrator, she works to commission for corporate brands, products, packaging, and advertising campaigns with specific experience in the fashion, beauty, and technology sectors.

As an artist, she works on projects from portrait commissions to large-scale complex works. These are often shown in public spaces or live performances. In addition, she creates personal work, which is exhibited globally. She has had solo shows in both Europe and Asia.

Jo is a strong promoter of professional practice in her art and illustration, including being a global ambassador for Liquitex paints and a European ambassador for Wacom. She is also a passionate educator, using social media and podcasts to reach her online audience of more than a million followers. Visit her at www.missled.co.uk.



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